

E

241

.B9E5

AN
O R A T I O N

DELIVERED AT

CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE 17TH OF JUNE, 1841,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER-HILL.

BY GEORGE E. ELLIS.

BOSTON:
WILLIAM CROSBY AND CO.,
No. 118, Washington Street.
1841.

W. H. M.

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH'S PRINT.

Exchange Street, Boston.

737 20

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS ORATION was prepared and delivered at the request of the Officers and Members of the "WARREN PHALANX," who celebrated this interesting anniversary in an appropriate manner, in conjunction with the citizens of Charlestown, whose participation they invited. In compliance with their wish, kindly and politely expressed, these pages are now published. Large portions, here printed, were necessarily omitted in the delivery. The author aimed to present a fair and minute account of the memorable action in this town which opened the American Revolution. He could find no nearer beginning for the details of the day, than in a statement of the preliminary measures of British aggression and Colonial resistance, and the appropriate conclusion of the narrative seemed to require an exhibition of some of the results of the bloody conflict. We are probably now in possession of all that ever will be known concerning it. One who searches deeply into its history, is led to ask some questions to which no living voice or written record can give an answer. The author has availed himself of all the known existing means for affording information and ensuring accuracy. The History of the Battle, by Col. Samuel Swett, is the most valuable of all the documents which relate to it. For a few particulars mentioned in the following pages, which are not derived from any public documents, it is to be understood that the author is indebted to some private sources of information.

O R A T I O N .

SOLDIERS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,—

By thus addressing the united and mingled throng before me, I can best declare the occasion and the result which we have assembled gratefully to commemorate. We have cause to congratulate ourselves that we live day after day upon a spot which is known over the world, to history and to fame. It is our privilege to behold, at our pleasure, the morning glories of a summer's sun from the beautiful summit which rises behind us, and thence to trace the land-marks and the water-lines signalized through all time, and for all people, by the action which we now celebrate. The name of that green eminence has already become familiar over the civilized world, and, saving the unchristian passions and sins which war necessarily involves, it has no association, record or story, which we may not remember and repeat with pride.

How beautiful, how sublime is the prospect which from that eminence greets our eyes ! We occupy the central point of a circle over which nature and art, war and peace, the history of the past, the happiness of the present, and the hope of the future, spread an inexhaustible interest. The great features of a battle scene, which yields in importance to no other on the surface of the earth, scarred as it is all over its circumference with such

melancholy memorials, are before our eyes. Across those calm blue waves is the land of the ancient enemy ; the land where a misguided and tyrannical Monarch, a proud and heartless Ministry, and a subservient Parliament devised their fruitless measures for the subjugation of a people who owed them nothing for debt or favor ; the land whence had come the hired soldiery then quartered upon the forced hospitality, and riotously disturbing the peace of the town of Boston. In that secure and beautiful harbor floated the ships of war, and the transports just arrived from Britain, which sent their military crew upon this shore, only to die upon the first spot of American soil which their feet should touch. Then we survey the fair and diversified peninsula upon which we stand, comprehending with its summits and its levels, but a square mile of earth. The south-eastern slope of Breed's Hill divides the waters of the bay into two broad rivers, which indent the shore, and just beyond the western base of Bunker's Hill, approach so near each other as to allow scarcely four hundred feet of breadth to the neck of land which unites the peninsula to the neighboring country. The Mystic on the north, washes with its double channel the farther shore. On the south, the opposite side of the mouth of the Charles, which in its narrowest span is about three hundred yards across, we see the now crowded peninsula of Boston, similarly environed by the waters of the sea, and united to the main land by a narrow neck. Upon a sloping eminence of that peninsula where it approaches nearest to us, we discern a place of graves, amid which was planted the battery whence came the missiles that reduced this flourishing town to a desolation. Around us is a glorious amphitheatre of hill tops, which sixty-six years ago on this hour were alive with anxious crowds, now covered over with flourishing villages, intersected and bordered by the highest achievements of modern art and science. Nowhere else upon the face of the earth is there such a congeries of striking objects, written over

with such moving narratives of virtue, and courage, and prosperity. The battle fields of ancient times, of the four ancient empires, have lost their landmarks—most of them now depend upon conjecture; but very few of them can be accurately defined, and more than all, the results of their awful carnage do not now appear in the free and vigorous life of either of those four proud empires of the ancient world. The plains and hill tops of later strife cannot all connect themselves with the religious cause and the blessed result, which have made that eminence so full of glory. Ours is the battle field of valor vindicating only the right, and made subservient to justice—of chivalry led on to self-sacrifice by christian prayers and the affections of a fire-side life—of a determination to do nothing for blood, but every thing for the free birthright, for the lawful possession of the labor of the hands, for the full privileges which every human being may and should enjoy without doing a wrong to any other of his race. Here are the fruits of that day's carnage,—the ocean traversed by ships freighted with the means of happiness, not with the instruments of woe, from that most renowned of nations from which we are proud to trace our origin,—the hill tops smiling with the blessings which God gives to labor, and which man may enjoy, when he has earned them by labor,—the temples of religion reared and revered by the consciences of the worshippers,—the homes and the families where the privileges of freedom confer the highest authority upon civil laws, and social duties, and religious charities. Not in vain were the death-dealing engines of war discharged upon that summit.

Amid the scenes, and upon the day thus consecrated to proud and grateful recollections, we are met in peace, with the blessings of peace all around us. We come together as the citizens of a town, which, though it takes its name from a king, bears inscribed upon the brightest, yet most melancholy page of its annals, the bold resist-

ance here made to a tyrant. We come as citizens of our common republic, to commemorate the deeds of our fathers, as they in their trials and death-struggles hoped and believed that we should recal their memories amid joyful and grateful observances.

This day has its appointed theme, its appropriate subject. After the lapse of so many years, and after so much research, information and eloquence, brought to the delineation of that battle—while tradition yet keeps the story fresh, and living witnesses, venerable with their hoary locks and bowed frames, still survive—the subject for this day can have but little of novelty. The theme itself, familiar as it is, must furnish its own interest. As from time to time this day shall be celebrated upon this spot, it will be the aim of the orator to bring to the illustration of his subject all the historical facts which throw light upon the story;—to clear it from all confusion in its details, that it may descend to posterity distinctly and fairly told;—to expound those eternal principles of right and justice, the violation of which by one party, and the defence of which by another party, have made this day forever memorable;—to trace down the influence of that righteous war, and of this its opening conflict;—and last of all to enforce its lessons of gratitude and duty.

The American Revolution occurred at such an era of the intellectual and moral progress of civil and social life, that even the school-boy might thoroughly understand and estimate the reasons which justified that long and dreadful struggle. That struggle was brought to its issue only by many successive and increasing wrongs inflicted upon our fathers.

Among all the factitious and theoretical systems which relate to the connection which ought to be maintained between a colony and the mother country, I can recognise but one principle or condition that is founded upon the essential laws of justice and order, and that is, that those who voluntarily emigrate from their native land, and

subdue and people a wilderness, should themselves be the sole judges as to the extent and nature of the connection which they will still maintain with their native land. If they choose to seek its protection—to acknowledge a dependence on their part—to refer to it for authority in their laws—to bow before the distant sceptre, and to mimic the forms and proceedings of the mother country—so let it be. But let it be understood that they act from choice, voluntarily, not by compulsion, nor in deference to any laws of nature or of equity. Compulsion! The word has no meaning in this connection—and if without a meaning it is still made to enforce an unjust claim, let the claim be resisted till nothing is left worthy of its further urging. If, however, that colony seeks the protection of the mother country, and establishes precedents by its authority, and receives help in its necessities from the mother country—then the claims of justice are answered by a measure of obedience conformed to the stipulation, by proper deference to the authority so established, and by payment, in kind or in value, for all assistance asked and received.

Upon this broad principle of justice, it would seem to me the simplest of all arguments to justify our fathers in asserting and maintaining their Independence of the British Crown, had there been even no grievances for them to resist. The founders of the New England Colonies, at least, were driven forth from their home by oppression—they twice purchased the land they occupied, once of English Patentees, once of the native red-men. They made the wilderness habitable by their own unpaid labor, and by their own honestly earned wealth. They never sought the shelter of a foreign throne, nor the protection of a foreign army, and when upon these rock-defended and wood-covered hills, the colonists had attained a vigorous manhood—God, and nature, and justice, made them free. Yet when Britain, loaded with public and private debts by almost universal hostilities with the other powers

of the earth, looked around for aid in bearing the burden, a bright vision passed before the eyes of the royal counsellors, of vast and shining heaps of revenue to be gathered from taxing the colonies, colonies too not represented even in the lower house of legislature, where alone the money of the people could be voted out of their hands. The moment the news of that ministerial counsel reached these shores, it was received with lowering looks, and with a resolution which never could be made to yield and never would yield. I can express the effect which the news produced, in no better way than by a familiar illustration; the colonists carefully buttoned their pockets, kept their hands close, and waited in silence, as men do in a crowd where they are suspicious of some of the unknown guests.

Much as the conduct on the part of the Americans, of the whole strife, was commented upon at the time in England, it is remarkable that such a degree of ignorance and indifference prevailed there concerning it.

The only shadow of right which could be maintained in the pretensions to authority of any kind which England claimed over us, was very much magnified, and grossly distorted. That the learned and excellent Dr. Johnson should have taken such a part against us, as he did in his pamphlet entitled "Taxation, no Tyranny," is most unaccountable and wonderful. He recommended that the British soldiers should be turned into free quarters among us, to keep us in awe of England, and that the negro slaves should be let loose over the land. Let it ever be borne in mind that negro slavery, for the sin and inconsistency of which we were so severely satirized during our war of Independence—let it ever be borne in mind, that negro slavery was introduced into these colonies and perpetuated here by the influence of the mother country, in defiance of the frequently and earnestly expressed wishes of the colonists.

The pretended ground of right upon which England

claimed a revenue from these colonies, was, that the parent state was the sovereign master of its colonies, and that among the privileges and powers of sovereignty was that of taxation. It was urged likewise that our commerce with England was the source of our wealth. And was not this commerce also the source of her wealth? Did we not give in this way, as much as we received? Again, England made a demand upon the gratitude of the colonies. She said we ought to contribute aid in bearing the public burdens, because they were in part incurred in helping us, and especially in defending us from our hostile neighbors in the French and Indian War. A poor pretence was this. If England had been asked while prosecuting here the French War, why she thus sent her armies to fight on a foreign soil, she would scarcely have answered that it was for the protection of the colonies. With more of honesty, and in simple truth, she would have replied that she fought in self-defence, from national pride, and to guard the rights and the territory which she supposed to be her own. And as to the help which we received from England in that war, did we not likewise give help? In the dreary campaigns and savage slaughters of that war, the native blood of New England flowed in streams. It was indeed in the rough and hardening experiences of that war that many of our own most valiant warriors learned how to fight for themselves when their day arrived. But all the claims of England for service then given, for favors then bestowed, were at the moment counterbalanced by service repaid, and by that knowledge of the country and of Indian warfare which our fathers brought to the contest. This remuneration was at the time acknowledged, indeed it was thought then that we had a claim on England. It is remarkable that, in the Parliamentary Debates, the very first mention of the American Colonists, after the accession of George III. is in a message in which the King himself commends and advises compensation for

the valuable services rendered by our fathers during the war of 1756.

Yet the resistance which our fathers offered to British aggression was stigmatised in England as rebellion and ingratitude. Only an honest belief of this charge, however erroneous it was, can redeem the measures of the advisers of an unjust and merciless war, from the imputation of unmitigated cruelty and gross folly. Meanwhile the honest disapprobation of our alledged rebellion and ingratitude, though the only justifiable, was by no means the only efficient motive of those who sent their mercenary troops across the ocean to fight with native freemen. There was an utter ignorance of the true principles of wealth and commerce, which would have brought advantages to England of an infinitely higher value than a revenue by taxation, had she known her own true interest. There was a sordid spirit at work, which induced the English freeholders to believe that if we were taxed their own burdens would be lighter. With these errors there was united the haughty pride of power, the insulting estimate of the colonists as mere traders and farmers afraid to fight, and the proverbial self-conceit of the British, which in spite of all their noble, and generous, and virtuous traits of character, has on several occasions led them to an unjust and tyrannical use of power.

There always existed in the New England Colonies a lurking spirit of opposition to any acts of sovereignty which England might attempt to exercise. This spirit frequently manifested itself with a most formidable energy, and was ready to burst forth on many occasions, when, for the sake of policy, or perhaps from the influence of timidity, it was kept in reserve. The acts of sovereignty which the colonists themselves exercised, in utter defiance of all the theories of the allegiance they owed to England, were numerous and very bold, and they date from the settlement at Boston. The first exhibition of this spirit which connects itself with the organ-

ised resistance offered in the Revolutionary War, occurred in the year 1754, on the expectation of the French aggressions. The Governors and heads of assemblies convened at Albany as Provincial Delegates, while adopting measures of preparation and defence, proposed to constitute themselves a grand council, with legislative and executive powers, including of course the power of raising taxes. The British ministry wished that such matters should be left to the royal Governors with their councils; but this was the Pelham ministry, and prudently, though ominously, it yielded to the colonists the first step to Independency.

The taxing of America was first moved in the British Parliament by Mr. Greville, in March, 1764. The motion was carried into effect by the Stamp Act, which passed the House of Commons by a vote of 250 to 50, and the House of Lords without debate or dissent, and was approved by the King March 22d, 1765. This delay of a year in pressing the motion was artfully designed by its mover, to afford an opportunity for the colonists to suggest some other mode of raising the necessary tax, which they should prefer. The insinuation was made to the colony agents in London, that if their constituents did follow the suggestion, they would establish the precedent of their being consulted henceforward, whenever Parliament proposed a tax. But the colonists were not deceived by this gilded bait—they resolutely protested against the measure through their agents. This project of taxing all legal instruments, bills, receipts and private contracts, was followed in the colonies by a Continental Congress at New York, which offered remonstrances and petitions, by mobs and disorders, by the tolling of bells and the constructing and abuse of effigies of obnoxious officers. The stamp agents were compelled to resign; business was transacted without the offensive instruments, and was thus of course illegal. The act was repealed the next year by the new administration, after Pitt had boldly and beautifully

triumphed in the House of Commons, by denying the right of the kingdom to lay a tax upon the colonies. This Repeal was accompanied by a Declaratory Act, maintaining the power and right of the kingdom to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever. This Declaration appears to have been winked at on this side of the water, as a salvo for British pride.

In 1767, under the Townshend administration, several measures most obnoxious to the colonists were devised in succession, such as import duties on paper, glass, paints and teas, a list of civil officers to be named by the Crown, with salaries fixed at his pleasure, a requisition for providing articles of food and clothing for the soldiers, at the expense of the colonies, together with the establishment of a custom house, and a board of commissioners. These measures were all followed by intense excitements of the people, and led to protective combinations. In 1770 Lord North brought about the repeal of the new duties, with the exception of that upon tea, which was retained for the purpose of upholding the disputed right of taxation. The massacre, as it was called, in Boston, on March 5th, in which three of the inhabitants were killed, and five others wounded in an affray with the soldiers, well nigh maddened the populace. From that time there was a continued succession of insurrections and hostilities.

There seems to have been not only profound wisdom and valuable experience, but a spirit of prophecy likewise, in the eloquent warning which was addressed to the House of Commons by our former Governor Pownall, who knew well the people of whom he spoke. Happy would it have been if the House had listened to his warning instead of being impatient under it, as we are told it was.

“The slightest circumstance will now in a moment throw every thing into confusion and bloodshed; and if some mode of policy does not interpose to remove this exertion of military power, the union between Great Britain and North America is broken forever; unless, what is

worse, both are united in a common ruin. That spirit which led their ancestors to break off from every thing which is near and dear to the human heart, has but a slight and trifling sacrifice to make at this time; they have not to quit their native country, but to defend it; not to forsake their friends and relations, but to unite with, and stand by them in one common union," &c.

An Act of Parliament in 1764, in anticipation of extreme measures, had empowered the King to station a military force in any province, and to quarter it upon the people. This act was not immediately enforced, but in 1767, some troops of the royal artillery arrived in Boston, and Governor Bernard made provision for their support at the castle, at the expense of the province, without authority thus to vote away money. He dissolved the General Court, and refused to call it together again. The people of Boston and of the neighboring towns formed and re-established their combinations against the importation and consumption of British goods, of tea, of foreign fruit, and articles of mourning apparel, recommending likewise great prudence and economy.

As the people were deprived of their General Court, a Convention of Delegates from more than a hundred towns assembled in Boston, in September, 1768, and sat several days. They requested the Governor to call together the General Court, but he refused. Their measures were judicious and calm, but resolute; they advised the observance of a day of fasting and prayer, and that the people should provide themselves with fire-arms. At the close of the Convention two more regiments arrived. They were quartered in Boston, in defiance of the earnest objections of the people and the council. They marched through the town in battle-array, and occupied the Common, the State House, the Court House, and Faneuil Hall. The people looked on in amazement, but they did not fear.

Governor Bernard was re-called to England August 1,

1769, and was succeeded by Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson, who followed up the measures of his predecessor, delaying at his pleasure the convoking of the General Court, and then arbitrarily summoning it to assemble at Cambridge. There were now about 2000 British troops in Boston. As they had been kept for a time in close quarters, the people had not received from them any provocations beyond that of their unwelcome presence. But in the winter of 1770 they had been allowed to walk about the streets in little squads, and their language and conduct were often insulting. It might have been foreseen that outrages like that upon the 5th of March would ensue. The resolute remonstrances of the people procured the removal of the troops from Boston to the castle. Discontent and bold resistance gradually ripened the elements of civil strife, and it was evident that a great crisis approached. The destruction of three cargoes of tea, belonging to the East India Company, in Boston harbor, in 1773, was a plain evidence of the determination of the people to resist the duty which Lord North's bill had left to be exacted on that import. At the session of the General Court, in May, 1773, a committee was appointed to open a correspondence with the committees of other colonies on political subjects, and it was this step which led to the convention of a Continental Congress at Philadelphia. The people had petitioned the King for the immediate removal of Governor Hutchinson, who in letters to England had made unfair and prejudicial representations of the state of things in this colony. He sailed for England in June, 1774. His house had been destroyed by a mob, and his property and papers scattered to the winds. He was succeeded by General Gage, the commander in chief of the British forces in America.

If England had not then a Stuart for a monarch, she had a Stuart ministry. Infatuation seems to be the only appropriate word by which to designate their galling accumulation of abuses and restrictions upon the colonists,

who had already given sufficient evidence of their indomitable resolution to resist. Next came the appointment of the Governor's counsellors by the King, instead of by the Court, as heretofore, and finally the climax of ministerial delusion in which, upon June 1, 1774, a Parliamentary bill declared that Boston Port should be closed against all commerce and navigation, and be in a state of blockade. The passage of this bill was procured under the expectation that the other ports of this and the other colonies would delight in the humiliation of Boston, and selfishly seize the opportunity thus put into their power of drawing commerce to themselves. Here again did the ministry delude itself by another gross miscalculation. The effect of the bill was wholly opposite to their expectations. Numberless copies of it were quickly multiplied and circulated over the continent, having, as Burke said, the inflammatory effect which the poets ascribe to the fury's torch. Copies of the bill printed on mourning paper, with a black border, were hawked in the streets of New York and Boston, under the title of "a barbarous, cruel, bloody and inhuman murder." In other places, the populace being called together by placards, burnt the bill with great solemnity. The General Court of Massachusetts recommended to the other colonies to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, and formed a solemn league and covenant against the use of English goods, though General Gage threatened all the subscribers of it with transportation to England for treason.

Within four months after the receipt of the Boston Port Bill, the deputies of twelve provinces, representing three millions of people, were convened at Philadelphia. Loyal and constitutional sentiments there found an honorable reception, and conciliatory measures on the part of Britain would even then have been of avail. Yet it was easy to see that allegiance to the throne was a word which was fast becoming of an empty sound throughout the continent. The sufferings to which the people of Boston were

subjected were relieved by generous contributions throughout the country. General Gage removed the Court from Boston to Salem, where it met by adjournment on June 7th, but on the 17th he sent his messenger to announce its dissolution. The messenger was shut out of doors, while the Court, before obeying the summons, chose their first delegates to the General Congress, Cushing, Samuel and John Adams, Paine and Bowdoin. About this time independent military companies were formed in Boston. General Gage began to assume despotic power, as the successive encroachments upon the chartered liberties of the people brought on the unavoidable issue. He ordered military stores from New York, he collected powder from the neighboring towns, sent out agents to survey the country, and erected strong fortifications on Boston neck. This last measure, which amounted to a shutting out of all intercourse between the people in Boston and the environs, by land as well as by sea, was regarded as an outrage which ought not to be endured. But he alleged that the object of the fortifications was to prevent the frequent desertions of his soldiers.

Delegates from the different towns met at Salem in October, and there constituted the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts. A committee of this body was directed to ascertain the character and amount of the military stores in the province, and to encourage military discipline. The taxes were turned from the authorised provincial treasurer to a new officer then appointed, a Committee of Safety, with executive authority, was chosen to act after the adjournment, and three general officers, Colonels Ward, Thomas and Poméroy, were invested with the command of the provincial military. Before that Congress met again, another warning voice was lifted in solemn tones, to counsel the mother country. On the 20th of January, 1775, Lord Chatham, after long retirement and severe bodily suffering, rose in the House of Lords. He foretold the event of these ruinous meas-

ures, he implored the nation to pause and consider, and then proposed that a humble request be made to the King to require General Gage to evacuate Boston. But the voice of warning was not heeded. The Provincial Congress met again by adjournment in February, 1775, organised their committees, arranged their correspondence, and provided military preparations and stores, designating Worcester and Concord as places of deposit. General Gage was well informed of all these proceedings, and hearing of some stores at Salem or Danvers, he sent one hundred and fifty men to seize them. But the attempt was rendered fruitless by resistance on the way.

There was a third session of the Congress in March, when vigorous measures were adopted. Large companies were organised, composed of men who held themselves ready for service at a minute's warning. More British troops arrived, and General Gage was equally determined to pursue his blind and misguided measures. Nor were legislative enactments the only grievances of which the people complained; insults and indignities of various kinds were offered them by officers and soldiers, which annoyed and vexed the citizens. The 16th of March had been consecrated as a day of Fasting and Prayer by the Provincial Congress. While the Society were assembling in the Church at West Boston, the regulars pitched two marquee tents within ten yards of the house, and continued with fifes and drums to disturb the service. At the commemoration of the 5th of March massacre, in the Old South Church, the patriot Samuel Adams courteously placed about forty British officers, who came to hear Warren's Oration, in the best seats, and they listened in quietness. At its close, Adams moved that an orator be chosen for the ensuing 5th March, to commemorate "the bloody and horrid massacre, perpetrated by a party of soldiers under the command of Captain T. Preston." His motion was received with hisses and cries from the officers, when great confusion ensued.

On the 8th of the month, a countryman (Thomas Ditson) from Billerica, while buying a musket in Boston, was seized by the regulars and covered with tar and feathers. He was carried through the streets on a truck, guarded by twenty soldiers with fixed bayonets, a label being attached to his back inscribed "American Liberty, or a Specimen of Democracy," while a promiscuous crowd, of officers, negroes and sailors followed, and the drums and fifes played "Yankee Doodle," a tune used by the British in ridicule of the provincials. The selectmen of Billerica sent a remonstrance to General Gage, and told him if it did not answer the purpose, they should "hereafter use a different style from that of petition and complaint." Colonel Hancock's house was twice assaulted during the month, when the fence and the windows were destroyed by the soldiers. On the night of the 18th the Providence coach was attacked as it entered the town, and its passengers were abused, but the driver, leaping from his seat, inflicted a severe castigation upon the British Captain Gore. These are but specimens of the many riots, outrages and indignities, which maddened the people of the town and of the province.

Such were the ministerial enactments, the public grievances and the military outrages, which were preparing the way for a civil war. It was evident that only an occasion was necessary to confront the foreign invaders, and the citizens of the soil, in two opposing armies. That occasion presented itself on the 19th of April, when General Gage, without provocation, warrant or justification, sent a body of troops to Concord to seize upon the military stores there deposited. Those troops on their way, going beyond their orders, wrong as they were, made an attack upon a few militia-men at Lexington, and then ensued the fight at Concord. It was a most inglorious exploit for his Majesty's regulars, for as the country people had good warning of their purpose, it was but poorly accomplished, and they were forced to retreat,

marking their homeward way by a line of killed and wounded, shot from the shelter of houses, woods, walls and fences, by the incensed country people. That dastardly enterprise was not even sanctioned by ministerial authority, when the news reached England, though an attempt was made to charge upon the provincials the sin of striking the first offensive blow. The Congress of the colony instituted inquiries and procured certified affidavits, which proved that both at Lexington and at Concord, the first fire was discharged by the British. That aggression upon the liberties of the people was equally unauthorised and exasperating. On the 22d of the month the Provincial Congress again assembled, voted to raise at once thirteen thousand men, to rally at Cambridge and the neighborhood, and asked aid from the other provinces, to which Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire responded. The forts, magazines and arsenals were secured for the country. Then, for the first time, the title of enemies was given to the British, and General Gage was denounced as the agent of tyranny and oppression. An account of the battle at Lexington was sent to England, and an address, closing thus: "Appealing to heaven for the justice of our cause, we determine to die or be free."

By advice received from Lord Dartmouth, the head of the War Department, General Gage issued a Proclamation on the 12th of June, in which he declared the discontents to be in a state of rebellion, offered full pardon to all, with the exception of Hancock and Adams, who would lay down their arms and bow to his authority, and announced that martial law was now in force.

This proclamation, issued on the first day of the week, was to be illustrated by a fearful commentary before another Sabbath came. For we have thus entered upon that week in our history when was fought the battle which has made that green summit the first altar of our country's freedom.

Of the 15,000 troops then gathered, by the cry of war,

at Cambridge and Roxbury, under the command of General Ward, about 10,000 belonged to Massachusetts, and the remainder to New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut. They constituted an irregular and undisciplined army, without accoutrements, or any other uniform than their working suits. Recruits and stragglers were continually coming in. Yet many of those provincial soldiers, though undisciplined by any thing like regular service, were by no means unused to the severities and obligations of a military life, having had experience in the Indian and French wars. One regiment of artillery, with nine field-pieces, had been raised in Massachusetts, and put under command of the famous engineer, Colonel Gridley, but it was not yet thoroughly organised. A self-constituted Provincial Congress discharged the legislative functions, and a Committee of Safety, elected by the Congress, filled the executive place of Governor and Council, and confined their functions chiefly to military directions.

There were in fact four independent armies then united in resistance to the foreign enemy. The forces then gathered in the neighborhood did not constitute a national army, for there was then no nation to own them; they were not under the authority of the Continental Congress, for the authority of that Congress was not as yet acknowledged; nor had that Congress as yet recognised those forces. Neither were the troops from Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire, subject to the command of General Ward, save as the friendly purpose which led them to volunteer their arms in defence of a sister colony, would be accompanied by the courtesy that would make them subordinate allies. These independent armies could act in concert only by yielding themselves to the influence of the common spirit which called them together. General Ward was a judicious and conscientious patriot, had served the colony in high civil and judicial stations, and in the French war, in which he was a Lieutenant

Colonel, had earned some military experience and fame. Lieutenant General Thomas, who accepted his commission on May 27, was distinguished for talents, patriotism and military reputation; he was second in command. General Pomeroy, likewise famous in the border war, continued to serve under the appointment of the Provincial Congress. General Putnam preceded his Connecticut troops, in hurrying to the scene of war, on the news of the battle of Lexington. His men soon followed him with like enthusiasm. The New Hampshire troops, on their arrival at Medford, made choice of Colonel Stark as their leader. Colonel Green commanded a regiment from Rhode Island.

The semicircle of headlands, slopes, points and eminences, united by green levels and extending over ten or twelve miles, which we may now see from yonder summit, in all the beauty of its summer garb, was then covered by the wide-spread wings of our citizen army. A part of Colonel Gerrish's regiment from Essex and Middlesex, and a detachment of New Hampshire troops, stationed on the hills of Chelsea, formed the tip of its left wing, and all along the eastern sea-board to Cape Ann and Portsmouth, were watchful spies on the alert to spread the alarm, if the British should attempt an entrance at any of the ports. Colonels Reed and Stark, next in the line, were stationed at Medford with their New Hampshire regiments. Lechmere's Point, at East Cambridge, was guarded against a hostile landing, to which it offered great facilities, by parts of Colonel Little's and other regiments. General Ward, with the main body of about 9,000 troops, and four companies of artillery, occupied Cambridge, while all the points of high land, the farms, and the main roads, were cautiously defended. Lieut. General Thomas, with 5,000 troops from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, with three or four companies of artillery, constituted the right wing of the army at Roxbury and Dorchester.

Here was a wide extent of space, approachable by land only at Roxbury neck, where the British lines were strongly entrenched, assailable at several points by armed ships and floating batteries, but protected to a great degree by shoal and tide waters, swamps, and intersecting creeks. The army was wholly voluntary in its organization, the soldiers having enlisted for different periods, depending for their daily food upon the provisions sent from their several towns. Subordination and obedience to their officers were secured and yielded by their respect for those whose names were familiar to them, as associated with magnanimity, enterprise and bravery.

Such was the constitution and the disposition of the American army when the provincials found themselves in the singular position of besieging their own chief town of Boston. That little peninsula was thus completely invested and hemmed in. Several of its inhabitants remained there from different motives; some as devoted loyalists, some as timid neutrals, some as spies, to watch each hostile movement and to communicate it to the colonists. Some of these last, together with many deserters, would occasionally cross the water by swimming, or in boats, or pass the Roxbury lines and enter the American camp by night. Others there were whose anxiety for their property induced them to continue in Boston. After hostilities had commenced, General Gage of course considered the citizens as prisoners. By the spies and deserters our officers generally received full information of all that occurred in Boston during the whole time of its investment by the British. That word British had now become synonymous with enemy, and though the regular army encamped in the capital might despise the undisciplined multitude which kept it in such close quarters, it was compelled to regard its opponents as powerful and formidable.

At the time of the battle at Lexington, there were about 4,000 British troops in Boston. The number was

increased to more than 10,000 before the action in this town. The best-disciplined and most experienced troops in the kingdom, many of them freshly laurelled in the recent wars on the European continent, under the command of officers equally distinguished, composed the invading army. Gage, the Governor and Commander in Chief, had long resided in America, and had married here. He came originally as a lieutenant under Braddock, and was with the general when he received his mortal wound. He had been Governor of Montreal, had succeeded General Amherst in command of the British forces on this continent, and Hutchinson as Governor of Massachusetts. He had constantly and vigorously favored the oppressive measures of the ministry which brought on the war. He had strongly fortified Boston by a double line of intrenchments crossing the neck, and by batteries there, and also upon the Common, commanding Roxbury and Cambridge, upon Copp's Hill, commanding Charlestown, upon Fort Hill and the northern extremity of the town, commanding the harbor, and upon West Boston Point. There were, besides, at least twenty-five armed vessels in the harbor.

To the inhabitants remaining in Boston, the population of which, independent of the military, was then about 20,000, the troops behaved in an insulting and tyrannical manner. To show their Episcopal contempt of Congregational churches, they removed the pews from the Old South, covering the floor with earth, and thus converted the edifice into a riding school for Burgoyne's squadron of cavalry. The two eastern galleries were allowed to remain, one for spectators, the other for a liquor shop, while the fire in the stove was lighted by valuable books from the library of a former pastor, Dr. Prince. They destroyed the steeple of the West Church, because it had been used for a signal staff, while they burnt the Old North, and several dwelling houses, for fuel. The provincials, in their Congregational contempt of Episcopalian

churches, could only retaliate by using the English Church at Cambridge for barracks, and melting its organ-pipes into bullets.

Thus confronted, both armies seemed alike confident of success, and anxious for a trial. The British were naturally mortified at their condition as besieged. They looked with anxiety to the heights of Charlestown and Dorchester, and were forming measures to occupy them, having decided to put them in force on the 18th of June. They regarded their opponents as rude, untaught, and cowardly farmers, and were nettled at being kept at bay by an army clothed in calico frocks and carrying fowling pieces.

The provincials did not feel their lack of discipline as they should have done. They were restless under restraint, they were used to skirmishes and thought such would be the contest before them. Yet in the Council of War, and in the Committee of Safety, there was a difference of opinion as to the measures to be pursued. If the heights of Charlestown were once occupied by the provincials, they must be retained against a constant fire, which could not be answered, as there were but eleven barrels of powder in the camp, and these contained one sixth of all that there was in the province. General Ward, and Joseph Warren, who was Chairman of the Committee of Safety, and had been elected Major General on the 14th of June, were doubtful as to the expediency of intrenching on Bunker's Hill. General Putnam was earnest in advocating the measure, saying, "the Americans are not at all afraid of their heads, though very much afraid of their legs; if you cover these, they will fight forever." Pomeroy coincided with Putnam; he was willing to attack the enemy with five cartridges to a man, for he had been accustomed in hunting, with three charges of powder, to bring home two or three deer. Daring enterprise prevailed in the Council, and it was resolved that the heights of Charlestown, which had

been reconnoitred the month before by Colonels Gridley and Henshaw, and Mr. Devens, should be fortified. On the 15th of June, the Committee of Safety, by a secret vote, which was not recorded till the 19th, advised the taking possession of Bunker's Hill, and of Dorchester heights. On the next day the Provincial Congress, as a counterblast to General Gage's proclamation, by which Hancock and Adams had been excepted from the proffer of a general amnesty, issued a like instrument, in which General Gage and Admiral Graves were the scape-goats.

It was amid the full splendor, luxuriance, and heat of our summer, when rich crops were waving upon all the hills and vallies around us, that the Council of War decided to carry into execution the vote of the Committee of Safety. We may omit the question as to the prudence or discretion of the measure, as being equally difficult of decision and unimportant, save as the misgivings of those who predicted that the deficiency of ammunition would endanger a failure, were proved by the result to be well grounded.

On Friday, June 16th, the very day upon which Washington was officially informed, in the Congress at Philadelphia, of his appointment to the command of the continental army about to be enlisted, General Ward issued orders to Colonels Prescott and Bridge, and the Commandant of Colonel Frye's regiment, to have their men ready and prepared for immediate service. They were all yeomen from Middlesex and Essex counties, and were habituated to the hard labors of a farm beneath a summer's sun. Captain Gridley's new company of artillery, and 120 men from the Connecticut regiment, under the command of Captain Knowlton, were included in the order.

Twenty-three years ago a controversy arose concerning the command of this expedition. Who was its commander, rightfully or actually? This question, which became most unfortunately mingled with party politics,

was most earnestly and passionately discussed. The only decisive evidence which both parties would have admitted to be satisfactory, would consist in the production of the order which came from General Ward; this, however, is not in existence. Judge Advocate Tudor, who presided at the court-martials instituted by General Washington on his arrival at Cambridge, said that Col. Prescott appeared to have been the chief. The contradictory and discordant statements of those who, having been engaged in the field at different places and at different hours, were called upon during the controversy to make depositions as to who was the commander in chief, are to be accounted for by the lapse of time and the effects of age; and besides, great allowances are to be made on account of the confusion in the army, and the hurried and unsystematic character of the expedition. He who led the detachment and fulfilled the order, probably received the order. The order was to intrench and to defend the intrenchments;—this order was fulfilled by night and by day, by the body of men whom Prescott led from Cambridge to Charlestown, and by the reinforcements who joined them. There is no evidence that Prescott received any order from any other officer besides General Ward. At any rate, he understood till the day of his death, that he had the command of the expedition. A fair and impartial detail of the action, if so be we are able to present it, will be sufficient to satisfy the simple desire for the simple truth.

Col. Gridley accompanied as chief engineer. Three companies of Bridge's regiment did not go, but as small parties of other regiments fell into the detachment, it consisted of about 1,000 men. They took with them provisions for one meal. Colonel Prescott was ordered to take possession of, to fortify and to defend, Bunker's Hill, but to keep the purpose of the expedition secret, nor was it known to the men, until they found the wagons on Charlestown neck, laden with the intrenching tools. The

detachment was drawn up upon Cambridge Common, in front of General Ward's head-quarters, after sunset, when prayers were offered by the Rev. Pres. Langdon, and about nine o'clock the expedition was in motion—Prescott, with two sergeants carrying dark-lanterns open in the rear, leading the way. Though Prescott has frequently been represented in accounts of the battle as dressed in the working garb of a farmer, and appears in Trumbull's painting, as wearing a slouched hat, and bearing a musket, he was in reality arrayed in a simple and appropriate military costume, a three-cornered hat, a blue coat, with a single row of buttons, lapped up and faced, and he wore his well-proved sword. This statement may be thought a trivial correction, but it sometimes happens that important facts depend upon small particulars. As he was sensible to the effects of the heat, and expected warm service, he took with him a linen coat, or banyan, which he wore in the engagement.

The order designated Bunker's Hill as the position to be taken. But by mounting it we can ourselves see that, commanded as it might be by shipping in the rivers, and by defences upon Breed's Hill, it would have been altogether untenable, except in connection with the latter summit, while for all purposes of restraining and annoying the enemy in Boston, Breed's Hill was far superior. Much time, however, was consumed in deliberation, after the detachment had crossed the neck, and it was only after the repeated and urgent warnings of the engineer, that longer delay would nullify all their labors, that the works were commenced upon Breed's Hill about midnight. In the account of the engagement afterwards prepared by the Massachusetts Congress, it is said that Breed's Hill was fortified by mistake. The reason for this statement is not apparent. Undoubtedly, if both summits had been fortified, and defended by troops well provided with ammunition, the provincials would have maintained their ground, but they could not have pre-

vented the design of the British in occupying the heights without securing Breed's Hill. As the summits are not within musket-shot, and as the British would certainly have occupied Breed's Hill, if not first taken by the provincials, our scanty ammunition and weak artillery would have been of but little avail.

The relative features of the two summits have not as yet been essentially changed, their highest points being about 130 rods apart, and Bunker's Hill lying a few rods north of a line drawn westward from Breed's Hill, which is directly opposite, at a distance of less than a mile from Copp's Hill in Boston. Then, as now, a straight road, beginning at the narrowest point of Charlestown neck, ascended and crossed the summit of Bunker's Hill, at an elevation of 112 feet, descended to the little valley, and there joined a road which completely encircled the base of Breed's Hill, which rises about 62 feet. One ascending road, answering to Wood street, united this encircling road with our present Main street. Back of the two summits the land sloped, with occasional irregularities, down to the Mystic shore. A point of land bearing east from Breed's Hill, and extending towards the bay, is called Morton's Point, and swells into a summit 35 feet high, called Morton's Hill. Between Breed's Hill and Morton's Point, much of the ground was sloughy, and occupied by several brick-kilns. Breed's Hill was then chiefly used by householders in Charlestown for pasturage, and was intersected by many fences. Towards Morton's Point some patches were then covered with tall waving grass, ripe for the scythe, while farther back, on the margin of Mystic river, at the base of the two summits, were fine crops of hay, just mown, lying upon the eve of the battle in winrows and cocks. The fences and tall unmown grass, which were of great advantage to the Americans in their stationary defences, were grievous impediments and annoyances to the British in their advances. There were then two or three houses and barns only

upon this south-western slope of Breed's Hill. The edifices of the town were gathered around the present square, and extended along the main street to the neck.

The monument now occupies the centre of the redoubt, which was eight rods square; the southern side, running parallel with the main street, was constructed with one projecting and two entering angles. On a line with the eastern side, which faced the navy yard, was a breastwork of nearly 400 feet in length, running down the hill towards the Mystic; the sally-port opened upon the interval between the redoubt and the breastwork, and was defended by a blind. Colonel Gridley planned the works, which exhibited an equal measure of military science and of yankee ingenuity. No vestige of the redoubt now remains, but a portion of the breastwork is distinctly visible. The intrenchments which we now see lying west of the monument, are remains of the fortifications made by the British, after the battle.

It has been asserted by two or three persons, and contradicted by others, who were together working by night upon the intrenchments, that General Putnam was there, directing, encouraging and aiding. If he was there, his presence must have been cheering and animating to those of the men who knew his person and history. As we have no certainty that he was then in the works, of course we cannot decide whether he had any part in their construction. He may have rode over the neck with or after the detachment, and he would have been a most welcome counsellor. As Putnam was met the next forenoon, coming from Cambridge to Charlestown, by Major Brooks, who was sent to General Ward with a message from Colonel Prescott, he must have left the redoubt, if he had been in it at all, in the course of the night, or very early in the morning.

But though the hands which spaded the bulwarks of earth upon that summit on the night of Friday, June 16th, were used to daily toil, and brought to their

unwonted midnight task the most unflinching courage and determination, it was still a work of dreadful anxiety. It was a bright starlight night of mid-summer, when the long hours of day almost deny an interval to the darkness, and we expect each moment after twilight in the west, to behold the grey of morning in the east. A guard was stationed at the shore nearest Boston, to anticipate any movement of the enemy. Prescott himself stood there in company with our late Governor Brooks, then a major in Bridge's regiment, and heard from the sentries relieving guard, the cry, "all's well." After a while Prescott, thinking it impossible that the enemy could be so hard of hearing, went down to the shore again, and finding all secure, he recalled the guard. The work went on, and burdened moments secured the results of hours. There was a scene for the imagination to picture, but we may not now delineate it. Even the narrow space occupied by the river's bed, was wider than the distance between those midnight laborers and their enemies. Five armed vessels then floated in the middle of the stream; the Glasgow, on the line of Cragie's Bridge, with 24 guns and 130 men, commanded the summit of Bunker's Hill and the neck by which this peninsula communicates with Medford and Cambridge; the Somerset, with 68 guns and 520 men, lying near the draw of our present old bridge, commanded Charlestown square and its dwelling houses; the Lively, with 20 guns and 130 men, lying off the navy yard, could throw its shot directly upon the redoubt; and the Falcon, sloop of war, lying off Morton's Point, defended the ascent between the landing places of the British and Breed's Hill; and the Cerberus, of 36 guns, maintained a continual fire during the attack. These ships were most advantageously situated for the purposes of the enemy, and it seems almost impossible that the sentries could have been wakeful at their posts, and not have heard the operations upon the hill.

The four hours of darkness after the labors of intrench-

ment commenced, at last gave place to the beams of early morning. On that moment when the sun sent forth the first heralds of his coming, seems to have been suspended the fate of empires. How awfully in contrast with the glorious goodness of the Almighty, in pouring out over the darkened sky and the dew-sprinkled earth, the bursting radiance of the sun, was to be the scene which the sun would behold upon that green eminence. How dreadful was the sin of deforming that fair scene, when the heavens in their glory greeted the earth in its loveliness—how dreadful was the sin of deforming such a scene with the frantic passions of war. If true patriotism, if wise policy, at least if the love which Christian people of the same blood and lineage should bear to each other, had been allowed its full, free influence over the parties in the approaching struggle, how much agony and woe, and fruitless wretchedness might have been averted! Even then it was not too late for justice, justice on the part of our proud and unfeeling oppressors, to have ensured peace. The blood shed at Concord and Lexington, with the long list of antecedent outrages, might have been forgiven by our fathers. They had not been the aggressors; they acted only on the defensive; they struck a blow only to ward off a blow. There is no evidence that the heights of Charlestown were occupied for any other purpose than that of defence, to confine the enemy within their narrow quarters, and to prevent any more hostile incursions into the country. When the morning sun displayed to the astonished invaders the character of the last night's labor, and showed them the workmen still employed, with undismayed hearts and untired hands, it was not even then too late for peace. Gage and his officers, at least, if their hired subordinates did not, should have honored, though they might not have feared that patriot band; should have respected the spirit which controlled them, and should have counted the cost of the bloody issue. But not one moment, not one word,

perhaps not one thought, was spent upon intercession or warning.

The instant that the first beams of light marked distinctly the outlines of the Americans, and of their intrenchments upon the hill, the cannon of the Lively, which floated nearest, opened a hot fire upon them, at the same time arousing the sleepers in Boston, to come forth as spectators or actors in the cruel tragedy. The other armed vessels, some floating batteries, and the battery on Copp's Hill, combined to pour forth their vollies, uttering a startling and dismal note of preparation for the day's conflict. But the works, though not completed, were in a state of such forwardness that the missiles of destruction fell harmless, and the intrenchers continued to strengthen their position. The enemy in Boston could scarcely credit their eyesight. Prescott, the hero of the day, with whom its proudest fame should rest, was undaunted, ardent, and full of heroic energy. He planned and directed, he encouraged the men, he mounted the works, and with his bald head uncovered, and his commanding frame, he was a noble personification of a patriot cause. Some of the men incautiously ventured in front of the works, when one of them was instantly killed by a cannon shot. This first victim was buried in the ditch, and his companions were fearfully warned of the fatalities which the day would bring yet nearer to them.

When the orders had been issued at Cambridge, the night before, to those who had thus complied with them, refreshments and reinforcements had been promised in the morning. Thus some of the men might have thought they had fulfilled their part of the work, and were entitled to relief, or were at liberty to depart. Some few, when the first victim fell, left the hill, and did not return. Those who remained were exhausted with their toil, and without food or water, and the morning was already intensely hot. The officers, sympathising with their situation and sufferings, requested Prescott to send to Cam-

bridge for relief. He summoned a council of war, but was resolute against the petition, saying that the enemy would not venture an attack, and if they did venture, would be defeated; that the men who had raised the works were best able to defend them, and deserved the honor of the victory; that they had already learned to despise the fire of the enemy. The vehemence of Prescott infused new spirit into the men, and they resolved to stand the dread issue. Prescott ordered a guard to the ferry to prevent a landing there. He was seen by Gage, who was reconnoitring from Copp's Hill, and who inquired of Counsellor Willard, by his side, "Who is that officer commanding?" Willard recognised his brother-in-law, and named Colonel Prescott. "Will he fight?" asked Gage. The answer was, "Yes, sir, depend upon it, to the last drop of blood in him; but I cannot answer for his men." Yet Prescott could answer for his men, and that amounted to the same thing.

The measures of the enemy were undoubtedly delayed by sheer amazement and surprise, on finding that the intrepidity of the provincials had anticipated them in an enterprise upon which they had deliberately decided. In the Council of War, called by Gage, all were unanimous that the enemy must be dislodged, but there was a difference of opinion as to the manner of effecting this object. The majority agreed with Generals Clinton and Grant, in advising that the British troops should be embarked at the bottom of the Common, in boats, and under the protection of the ships and floating batteries, should land at Charlestown, and thus hold the provincials and their intrenchments at their mercy. But General Gage overruled the advice, and determined upon landing and making an attack in front of the works, fearing that his troops, if landed at the neck, would be ruinously surrounded by the intrenchers, and the whole army at Cambridge.

Meanwhile General Ward, though repeatedly solicited by Putnam and by messengers sent from Prescott, hesi-

tated about weakening the strength of the main army by sending reinforcements upon the hill, for as the enemy had not yet landed, he had good reason to fear that they might divide their forces, and while engaging with the intrenchers, effect a landing at some other spot, and proceed to Watertown or Cambridge, where the scanty stores of the provincials were deposited.

By nine o'clock the preparations in Boston, heard and seen by Prescott on the hill, informed him of the determination of the British to attack. He therefore gave up his first opinion, that they would not dare to resist him, and comforted himself and his men with the promise of certain and glorious victory. He sent Major Brooks to Gen. Ward, to urge the necessity of his being reinforced. Brooks being obliged to proceed on foot, as Capt. Gridley would not risk one of his artillery horses to pass the neck, which was swept by the Glasgow frigate, arrived about ten o'clock at head-quarters, where the Committee of Safety were then in session. Brooks's urgency, seconded by the solicitations of Richard Devens, a member of the committee, and a citizen of Charlestown, induced General Ward to order that Colonels Reed and Stark, then at Medford, should reinforce Prescott with the New Hampshire troops. The companies at Chelsea were then recalled, and the order reached Medford at 11 o'clock. The men were as speedily as possible provided with ammunition, though much time was consumed in the preparation. Each man received two flints, a gill of powder, and fifteen balls. They were without cartridge-boxes, and used powder-horns and pouches, or their pockets, as substitutes, and in making up their cartridges they were obliged to beat and shape their balls according to the different calibre of their guns.

Dr. Joseph Warren, one of the most distinguished and self-sacrificing of the many patriots of the time, had not yet taken the commission which was granted to him on the 14th of June. He had twice maintained the cause

of liberty in the very teeth of British officers, on the annual commemoration of the 5th of March. When the report of the coming action reached him at Watertown, where he then was, as acting President of the Provincial Congress and Chairman of the Committee of Safety, though suffering from illness and exhaustion, he resolved to join in the strife. Wholly inexperienced as he was in military tactics, his determination could not be shaken by the earnest remonstrances of his friends. His presence and counsel were needed in the committee, but he persisted in his resolve, and we must lament, as all his contemporaries lamented, that his heroism outran his prudence, and would not be controlled by duty in another direction.

The hostile arrangements of the British being concluded, our devoted band upon the slightly fortified hill, soon saw the result. At noon, twenty-eight barges, formed in two parallel lines, left the end of Long Wharf, and made for Morton's Point, the most feasible landing-place. The barges were crowded with British troops of the 5th, 38th, 43d and 52d battalions of infantry, two companies of grenadiers, and ten of light infantry. These troops were all splendidly appointed, with glittering firelocks and bayonets, but sadly encumbered, for the hot work before them and the hot sun above them, by their arms and ammunition; and it would seem by the statement of their own historian, Stedman, that they carried a hundred pounds of provision, intended to last for three days. Their regular and uniform appearance, with six pieces of ordnance shining in the bows of the leading barges, presented an imposing and alarming spectacle to our raw soldiery. Some of the regulars that had lately arrived, had been retained on board of the transports, on account of the crowded state of Boston. Some of these were landed for the first time at Charlestown, and thus the first spot of American soil upon which many of them trod, became to them a grave. The officers were all men

of experience and valor : Generals Howe and Pigot, Cols. Nesbit, Abercrombie, and Clarke, Majors Butler, Williams, Bruce, Spendlove, Smelt, Mitchell, Pitcairn, Short, Small, and Lord Rawdon, were the most distinguished. Captain Addison, allied to the author of the *Spectator*, had arrived in Boston on the day before the battle, and had then accepted an invitation to dine with General Burgoyne on the 17th, when a far different experience awaited him, for he was numbered among the slain.

This detachment landed at Morton's Point about one o'clock, defended by the shipping, and wholly unmolested. They soon discovered an egregious and provoking act of carelessness on the part of their master of ordnance, in sending over cannon-balls too large for their pieces. They were immediately returned to Boston, and were not replaced in season for the first action. At the same time General Howe, the commander of the detachment, requested of General Gage a reinforcement, which he thought to be necessary the moment that he had a fair view of the elevated and formidable position of the provincials, as seen from the point.

While these messages were passing, some of the British troops stretched at their ease upon the grass, ate in peace their last meal, refreshing their thirst from large tubs of drink—a tantalizing sight to the provincials. About two o'clock the reinforcement landed at Madlin's ship-yard, now the navy yard. It consisted of the 47th battalion of infantry, a battalion of marines, and some more companies of grenadiers and light infantry. The whole number of British troops who engaged in the course of the action did not fall short of, and probably exceeded, 5,000. In connection with this force, which far surpassed that of the provincials in numbers, and was immeasurably superior to them in discipline and military appointments, we are to consider the marines in the ships, which completely cannonaded three sides of the hill, and the six-gun battery on Copp's Hill, as engaging in the

unequal contest. Contrasting a British regular with a provincial soldier, we are accustomed to ascribe immense advantages of discipline to the former. Yet we are to remember that an overpowering superiority of character and of cause was on the side of the latter. If we could have followed a recruiting sergeant of Great Britain at that time, as he hunted out from dram-shops and the haunts of idleness and vice, the low and vulgar inebriate, the lawless and dissolute spendthrift, seeing how well the sergeant knew where to look for his recruits, we should know how much discipline could do for them, and how much it must leave undone. The provincials were not acquainted with the forms and terms of military tactics; but they knew the difference between half-cock and double-cock, and the more they hated the vermin which they had been used to hunt with their fowling-pieces, the straighter did the bullet speed from the muzzle. But their superiority consisted in the kind of pay which they were to receive, not in pounds and shillings, but in a free land, a happy home, and rulers of their own choice.

While the British troops were forming their lines, a slight work was constructed by the Connecticut troops, sent from the redoubt, under Captain Knowlton, which proved of essential service to the provincials. A rail fence, under a small part of which a stone wall was piled to the height of about two feet, ran from the road which crossed the tongue of land between the hills, to the bank of the Mystic, with a few apple trees on each side of it. The provincials pulled up some other fences near by, and set them in a line parallel with this, filling the space between with the fresh mown hay around the ground. The length of this slight defence was about 700 feet. It was about 600 feet in rear of the redoubt and breastwork, and had it been on a line with them, would have left a space of about 100 feet between the end of the earthen and the wooden defences. Thus there was an opening of about 700 feet on the slope of the hill between the

intrenchments and the rail fence, which the provincials had not time to secure. Part of this intervening space then, as now, was sloughy, and as there were no means of defending it save a few scattered trees, the troops behind the breastwork were exposed to a galling fire from the enemy, on their third attack, which finally brought about the unfavorable issue of the strife. The six pieces of British artillery were stationed at first upon Morton's Hill.

All these preparations, visible as they were to thousands upon the neighboring hill-tops, steeples and house-roofs, were watched with the intensest anxiety. Undoubtedly, the common persuasion and fear was that General Gage would himself lead a portion, if not the whole of the residue of his army, upon an attack at some other point in the semi-circle. Roxbury was heavily cannonaded, to retain the forces there from proceeding to Charlestown. A schooner, with 500 or 600 men, was directed to the Cambridge shore, but wind and tide proved unfavorable. In fear of these movements great caution was advisable in sending reinforcements upon the hill. Captain Callender was ordered there with his artillery. Gardner's, Patterson's and Doolittle's regiments were stationed at different points between Charlestown neck and Cambridge. This neck, though frequently passed by our officers and troops in single file, was fearfully hazardous during the whole day, as it was raked by a fire of round, bar, and chain shot, from the Glasgow, and from two armed gondolas near the shore. The reinforcements arrived from Medford before the engagement, though General Stark had led them very moderately, insisting that "one fresh man in battle is worth ten fatigued ones." General Putnam stopped a part of them to unite with a detachment from the redoubt in attempting to fortify Bunker's Hill, which was of great consequence to the provincials in case of a retreat. Stark with oaths and encouragements led on the remainder to the rail fence.

It soon became a matter of importance to the provincials to seek the utmost possible help from their artillery, but it amounted to very little. A few ineffectual shot had been fired from Gridley's pieces in the redoubt, against Copp's Hill and the shipping, when the pieces were removed and placed with Captain Callender's at the space between the fence and the breastwork. Here they would have been of some service in defending our weakest and most exposed point. But the officers and the companies who had them in charge were wholly ignorant of their management, and on the plea of having unsuitable cartridges, Callender was drawing his guns off to prepare ammunition, when Putnam urged him to return. The pieces were fired a few times, and soon afterwards were moved by Captain Ford to the rail fence.

General Pomeroy, at Cambridge, old as he was, was moved like the war-horse at the smell of the battle. He begged a horse of General Ward that he might ride to Charlestown, but on reaching the neck, and observing the hot fire which raked it, he was afraid to risk the borrowed animal. Giving him then in charge to a sentry, he walked on to the rail fence, where his well-known form and countenance called forth enthusiastic shouts. Colonel Little came up with his regiment, and the men were stationed along the line, from the rail fence on the left to a cart-way. There were also reinforcements of about 300 troops each, from Brewer's, Nixon's, Woodbridge's and Doolittle's regiments, detachments of which were stationed along the main street in Charlestown. Colonel Scammans, who was deprived of his sense and his courage, either by confusion or fear, had been ordered by General Ward to go where the fighting was. He went to Lechmere's Point, understanding, as he said, that the enemy were landing there. He was advised to go to the hill. He chose to understand the nearest hill, and so he posted himself upon Cobble Hill, where the Insane Hospital now stands, and occupied that useless position. Gen.

Warren arrived just before the action. Putnam endeavored to dissuade him from entering it, and then recommended to him a safe place, and offered to receive his orders. But Warren could not be thus wrought upon. He said he came only as a volunteer, and instead of seeking a place of safety, wished to know where the onset would be most furious. Putnam pointed to the redoubt as the place of danger and importance. Prescott there offered to receive Warren's orders, but he again said he was happy to serve as a volunteer.

The tune of Yankee Doodle, which afforded the British so much sport as ridiculing the provincials, was the tune by which our fathers were led on to that contest. Let their example commend to us this only way of depriving ridicule of its sting, for there is nothing which it so much annoys men to spend in vain as their scorn.

Before the engagement commenced, Captain Walker, of Chelmsford, led a band of about fifty resolute men down into Charlestown to annoy the enemy's left flank. They did great execution and then abandoned their dangerous position, to attack the right flank upon Mystic river. Here the captain was wounded and taken prisoner. He died of his wounds in Boston jail.

The British, in their attack, aimed at two distinct objects; first, to force and carry the redoubt; second, to turn the left flank of our troops, and thus to cut off their retreat. To accomplish the former, General Pigot, who commanded the British left wing, displayed under cover of the eastern slope of the hill, and advanced against the redoubt and breastwork. General Howe led the right wing, which advanced along the shore of the Mystic to the rail fence. The artillery prepared the way for the infantry, and it was at this time that the mistake of the oversized balls was a great grievance to the enemy, as they had but a few rounds of proper shot.

It was of vital necessity that every charge of powder and ball spent by the Americans should take effect.

There was none for waste. The officers commanded their men to withhold their fire till the enemy were within eight rods, and when they could see the whites of their eyes, to aim at their waistbands, also to "aim at the handsome coats, and pick off the commanders." As the British left wing came within gun-shot, the men in the redoubt could scarcely restrain their fire, and a few discharged their pieces. Prescott, indignant at this disobedience, vowed instant death to any one who should repeat it, and promised by the confidence which they reposed in him to give the command at the proper moment. His Lieutenant Colonel, Robinson, ran round the top of the works and knocked up the muskets. When the space between the assailants and the redoubt was narrowed to the appointed span, the word was spoken at the moment; the deadly flashes burst forth, and the green grass was crimsoned with the life-blood of hundreds. The front rank was nearly obliterated, as were its successive substitutes, as the Americans were well protected, and were deliberate in their aim. The enemy fell like the tall grass which grew around before the practised sweep of the mower. General Pigot was obliged to give the word for a retreat. Some of the wounded were seen crawling with the last energies of life from the gory heap of the dying and the dead, among whom the officers, by their proportion, far outnumbered the private soldiers. As the wind rolled away the suffocating smoke, and the blasts of the artillery and the musketry for a moment ceased, the awful spectacle, the agonising yells and shrieks of the sufferers were distracting and piercing. Prayers and groans, foul impious oaths, and fond invocations of the loved and the dear, were mingled into sounds which scarcely seemed of human utterance, by the rapturous shout of victory which rang from the redoubt. The earth has not a sight or sound more maddening, in its passion or its woe, than a battle-field. Hell then gushes forth from the fiery bowels of the earth, and covers its fair surface with the flames and yells of demon strife.

While such was the temporary aspect of the field near the redoubt, General Howe, with the right wing, made for the rail fence, where Putnam, assisted by Captain Ford's company, had posted the artillery with success. Here, as at the redoubt, some of the provincials were tempted to discharge their muskets while the advancing enemy were destroying a fence which crossed their path. Putnam, with an oath, threatened to cut down with his sword the next offender. The word was given when the enemy were within eight rods. The artillery had already made a lane through the column, and now the fowling-pieces mowed down their victims, especially the officers, with fearful celerity. The strong lungs of Major McClary raised the voice of encouragement above the roar of the cannon. The assailants were compelled to retreat, leaving behind them heaps of the fallen, while some of the flying even hurried to their boats. Their artillery had stopped in the slough among the brick-kilns, and could do but little. The regulars did not take aim, and their shot passed high over the heads of the Americans. The trees around were afterwards observed with their trunks unscathed, while their branches were riddled through and through. The passionate shout of victory again rang through the American lines, and even the coward was nerved to daring.

Now it was that our troops and our cause suffered from the want of discipline, and from the confusion apparent in the whole management of the action, originating in the hasty and imperfect preparation, and in their ignorance of the purposes of the enemy. The neck of land ploughed by the engines of death, and clouded by the dust thus raised, was an almost insuperable obstacle to the bringing on of reinforcements. Major Gridley, wholly unfitted in spirit and in skill, had been put in command of a battalion of infantry, in compliment to his father. He lost, and could not recover, his self-possession and courage. Though ordered to the hill, he advanced towards Charles-

town slowly and fearfully, and though urged by Colonel Frye to hasten, he was satisfied with the poor service of firing three-pounders from Cobble Hill upon the Glasgow. His Captain Trevett refused obedience to such weakness, and ordered his men to follow him to the works. Colonel Gerrish, with his artillery on Bunker's Hill, could neither be urged nor intimidated by Putnam to bring his pieces to the rail fence. He was unwieldy with corpulence, and overcome with heat and fatigue. His men had been scattered from the summit of the hill, which took tremendous effect here, as it was thought to be strongly fortified.

The enemy rallied for a second attack. Though they had sorely suffered, and some few of the officers were reluctant to renew the fatal effort, yet the large body, like the general, would have yielded to death in any form of horror, before they would have left the field to those whom they had always represented as cowards. At this crisis four hundred reinforcements came over from Boston to repair the British loss, and Dr. Jeffries accompanied them as surgeon. The regulars again steadily advanced, and with the dreadful apathy of feeling induced by a battle-field, they even piled up the bodies of their slaughtered comrades as a breastwork for their own protection. The artillery was now drawn up by the road which divided the tongue of land on the Mystic from the hill, to within nine hundred feet of the rail fence. The object was to bring it on a line with the redoubt, and to open a way for the infantry. It was during this second attack that Charlestown was set on fire. Probably a double purpose was intended by this act: first that the smoke might cover the advance of the enemy, and second to dislodge some of the provincials, who from the shelter of the houses had annoyed the British left wing. General Howe sent over the order to Burgoyne and Clinton to fire the town, and the order was fulfilled by carcasses thrown from Copp's Hill, which, aided by some marines who

landed from the Somerset, completed the work of desolation.

The Americans were prepared for the renewed attack. They had orders to reserve their fire till the enemy were within six rods, and then to take deadly aim. As before, the shot of the enemy was mostly ineffectual, ranging far above the heads of the provincials. Still some of the privates fell, and Colonels Brewer, Nixon and Buckminster, and Major Moore were wounded, the latter mortally, crying out in his death-thirst for water, which could not be obtained nearer than the neck, whither two of his men went to seek it. The British stood, for a time whose moments were hours, the deadly discharge which was poured upon them as they passed the appointed line, while whole ranks of officers and men fell in heaps. General Howe stood in the thickest of the fight, wrought up to a desperate determination. For a time he was almost alone, his aid-de-camps, and many other officers of his staff, lying wounded or dead. But though he would not lead a second retreat, he was compelled to follow it, and to hear the repeated shout of victory rise from the patriot band who had weighed the choice between death and slavery. Thus the British were twice fairly and completely driven from the hill. For success, up to this moment, the provincials have not had the deserved acknowledgment in the English histories. Even Burke (if, as is probable, he wrote the account in the *Annual Register*,) refers only once to the repulse, and then merely says the regulars "were thrown into some disorder."

But now the fortunes of the day were to be reversed, so far, and so far only, as to attach the bare name of victory to the side of the foreign assailants. The provincials encouraged themselves with the hope that the two repulses which had compelled the regulars to retire with such stupendous loss, would deter them from a renewed attack. Some of the British officers did indeed remonstrate against leading the men to another butchery, but their remon-

strance was disdainfully repelled by their comrades. During the second attack, a provincial, with incautious loudness of speech, had declared that the ammunition was exhausted, and he was overheard by some of the regulars. General Clinton, who from Copp's Hill had witnessed the repeated repulse of his Majesty's troops with great mortification, took a boat and passed over as a volunteer, bringing with him added reinforcements. A new mode of attack was now determined upon. General Howe having discovered that weak point, the space between the breastwork and the rail fence, now led the left wing, and resolved to apply the main strength of the assault against the redoubt and the breastwork, particularly to rake the latter with the artillery from the left, while he disguised this purpose by a feigned show of force at the rail fence. The men now divested themselves of their heavy knapsacks, some of them even of their coats. They were ordered to stand the fire of the provincials, and then to make a resolute charge at the point of the bayonet. The three facts last mentioned, viz. the knowledge of the enemy that the provincials lacked ammunition, the encouragement of the presence of Gen. Clinton, and the discovery of the weak point in the works, may have nerved the British to undertake a third attack.

While these hostile preparations were in progress, the little band of devoted patriots, exhausted almost to complete prostration by their long and unrefreshed toil of the night, and by the bloody work of noon-day, had time to summon their remaining energies, to resolve that the last blow should be the heaviest, to think upon the glory of their cause and the laurels they should forever wear. The few remaining cartridges were distributed by Prescott. The small number of men whose muskets were furnished with bayonets, stood ready to repel the charge; and those who were without this defence, as well as without ammunition, resolved to club their muskets and wield their heavy stocks, while the ferocity of despair strung

every nerve. Even the loose stones of the intrenchments were gladly secured as the last stay of an unflinching resolution.

A body of reinforcements, fresh and resolute, and provided with bayonets, might have forced the regulars to a third and final retreat, but as before remarked, unavoidable confusion prevailed in the American camp. The neck of land, the only line of communication, wore a terrible aspect to raw recruits, and General Ward was without staff officers to convey his orders. The regiments which had been stationed along the road to wait further commands, were overlooked. Colonel Gardner, though thus left without orders, panting to join the strife, led 300 men to Bunker's Hill, where Putnam first set them upon intrenching, but soon urged them to action at the lines. The Colonel commanded his men to drop their tools and follow. He was leading them to the post of dangerous service, when he received a mortal wound by a musket-ball in the groin. As he was borne off the field, he commanded his men to conquer or die; deprived of their officer, but few of them engaged in the action. His son, a youth of nineteen, met him on his way, and overcome with grief, sought to aid him, but the father commanded him to march to his duty. Colonel Scammans remained on Cobble Hill, but a detachment of Gerrish's regiment, under their Danish adjutant Ferbigier, rushed toward the fence. A few of the Americans occupied two or three houses and barns on the slope of Breed's Hill, and annoyed, for a time, the left flank of the enemy.

The artillery of the British effected its murderous purpose, raking the whole interior of the breastwork, driving its defenders into the redoubt, and sending the balls there after them, through the open sally-port. Lieut. Prescott, a nephew of the Colonel, had his arm disabled, and was told by his uncle to content himself with encouraging his men; but having succeeded in loading his musket, he was passing the sally-port to seek a rest from which to

fire it, when he was killed by a cannon-ball. It was evident that the intrenchments could no longer be maintained, but the resolution to yield them only in the convulsion of the last effort, nerved every patriot arm.

The British officers were seen to goad on some of their reluctant men with their swords. It was for them now to receive the fire, and to reserve their own till they could follow it by a thrust of the bayonet. Each shot of the provincials was true to its aim. Colonel Abercrombie, Majors Williams and Spendlove, fell. General Howe was wounded in the foot. Hand to hand, and face to face, were exchanged the last awful hostilities of that day. Only a ridge of earth divided the grappling combatants, whose feet were slipping upon the gory sand, while they joined in the mortal strife. When the enemy found themselves received with stones, the missiles of a more ancient warfare, they knew that their work was nearly done, as they now contended with unarmed men. Young Richardson, of the Royal Irish, was the first who scaled the parapet, and he fell, as did likewise the first rank that mounted it, among whom Major Pitcairn, who had shed the first blood at Lexington, was shot by a negro soldier. It was only when the redoubt was crowded with the enemy and the defenders in one promiscuous throng, and assailants on all sides were pouring into it, that Prescott, no less, but even more a hero, when he uttered the reluctant word, ordered a retreat. A longer trial would have been folly, not courage. Some of the men had splintered their musket-stocks in fierce blows, nearly all were defenceless, yet was there that left within them, in a dauntless soul, which might still help their country at its need. Prescott gave the crowning proof of his devoted and magnanimous spirit, when he cooled the heat of his own brain, and bore the bitter pang in his own heart, by commanding an orderly, and still resisting retreat. He was the hero of that blood-dyed summit—the midnight leader and guard, the morning sentinel, the

orator of the opening strife, the cool and deliberate overseer of the whole struggle, the well-skilled marksman of the exact distance at which a shot was certain death: he was the venerable chief in whose bright eye and steady nerve all read their duty; and when conduct, skill and courage could do no more, he was the merciful deliverer of the remnant. Prescott was the hero of the day, and wherever its tale is told, let him be its chieftain.

The troops in the redoubt now fought their pathway through the encircling enemy, turning their faces towards the foe, while they retreated with backward steps. Gridley, who had planned and defended the works, received a wound, and was borne off. Warren was among the last to leave the redoubt, and at a short distance from it, a musket-ball through his head killed him instantly. When the corpse of that illustrious patriot was recognised and identified the next morning by Dr. Jeffries, General Howe thought that this one victim well repaid the loss of numbers of his mercenaries. It is not strange that, both in English and American narratives of that day, and in some subsequent notices of it, Warren should have been represented as the commander of the provincial forces. His influence and his patriotism were equally well known to friend and foe. There is no more delicate task than to divide among many heroes the honors of a battle-field, and the rewards of devoted service. Yet the high-minded will always appreciate the integrity of the motive which seeks to distinguish between the places and the modes of service, where those who alike love their country enjoy the opportunity of securing the laurels of heroism and devotion. The council-chamber and the forum, and the high place in the public assembly, offer to the patriot-statesman the opportunity for winning remembrance and honor to his name; the battle-field must retain the same high privilege for the patriot-soldier, for there alone can he earn the wreath. Let the chivalry and the magnanimity of Warren forever fill a brilliant page in our his-

tory, but let not a partial homage attach to him the honor to which another has a rightful claim. It was no part of his pure purpose, in mingling with his brethren on that field, to monopolize its honors, and to figure as its hero. It is enough that he stood among equals in devotion and patriotism. Let it be remembered that he did not approve the measure of thus challenging a superior enemy with such insufficient preparation :—the more honorable, therefore, was his self-sacrifice, in giving the whole energy of his will to falsify the misgivings of his judgment. Here, then, is his claim, which, when fully allowed, leaves the honors of that summit to the leader of the heroic band.

And while such was the issue at the redoubt, the left wing, under Putnam, aided by some reinforcements which had arrived too late, was making a vigorous stand at the rail fence. But the retreat at the redoubt compelled the resolute defenders to yield with slow and reluctant steps, as their flank was opened to the enemy. Putnam pleaded and cursed ; he commanded and implored the scattering bands to rally, and he swore that he would win them the victory. For his foul profanity he made a sincere confession before the church and congregation of which he was a member, after the war. On the day of the battle, his great and consuming purpose was to fortify Bunker Hill. To effect this, he passed and repassed between Cambridge and Charlestown, sending for tools to the redoubt, where he does not appear to have been present during the action, and endeavoring to rally the flying even when there was no longer a hope. His furious ardor may or may not have needed the control of deliberate judgment, and of that essential characteristic of the soldier, which is termed ‘conduct.’ His courage was unquestionable. I have fairly presented him and his services as a careful examination of all the authorities within my reach has enabled me to decide upon a point where writers better informed than myself have differed. I cannot regard Putnam either as the commander or the hero of

the day ; and while I would speak with great diffidence upon so delicate a point, I would still hope that my conclusions in reference to it partake as much of truth as I am sure they do of impartiality.

Pomeroy likewise implored the men to rally, but in vain. The last resistance at the rail fence restrained the enemy from cutting off the retreat of the provincials. Yet the enemy were in no condition to pursue, as they were alike exhausted, and were content with the little patch of ground which they had so dearly purchased. The provincials retreated to Cambridge by the neck, and by the Winter Hill road, taking with them only one of the six pieces of artillery which they had brought to the field. The battle had occupied about two hours, the provincials retreating just before five o'clock. The British lay on their arms at Bunker Hill all night, discharging their pieces against the Americans who were safely encamped upon Prospect Hill, at the distance of a mile.

Prescott repaired to head-quarters to make return of his trust. He was indignant at the loss of the battle, and implored General Ward to commit to him three fresh regiments, promising with them to win back the day. But he had already honorably accomplished all that his country might demand. He complained bitterly that the reinforcements, which might have given to his triumph the completeness that was needed to make it a victory, had failed him. A year afterwards, when he was in the American camp at New York, he was informed how narrowly he had escaped with life. A British sergeant, who was brought into the camp, on meeting with Prescott there, called him by name. Prescott inquired how or where he had known him. The man replied that he knew him well, and that his acquaintance began at the battle in Charlestown. Prescott had there been pointed out to him as the commander, and in the first two attacks he had singled him out and taken a deliberate aim. Though his position at each time was so favorable as to

convince him the shot would be fatal, yet Prescott had been unharmed. On the third attack, impelled by the same purpose, he had charged the commander at the point of the bayonet, but the strong arm and the sword of Prescott thrust aside the weapon, and the baffled sergeant concluded him to be invulnerable. Prescott kindly presented the poor soldier with a gift of charity to relieve his disappointment. The pierced garments of the hero, preserved in his family, bear witness to the repeated efforts of his foe.

The number of our troops in the action, including the occasional reinforcements, and those who came only to cover the retreat, did not exceed 4,000. Of these, 115 were killed and missing, 305 were wounded, and 30 were taken prisoners; making our whole loss 450. Prescott's regiment suffered most severely.

The whole British loss was rated by the Provincial Congress, on their best information, at 1500, but Gage acknowledged only 1054, including 89 officers; 226 being killed, and 828 wounded.

Loud and agonizing was the mourning in Boston, when the wounded were committed to the crowded hospitals; and the sympathies of the inhabitants were demanded alike for friends and foes.

But though the sword was lifted against our fathers by their own brethren, and in a cause which we must pronounce to have been unrighteous and tyrannical, we feel impelled to pay a just tribute to the bravery and gallantry of the British officers and soldiers upon the field. To march boldly forward, as they did thrice, and bare their bosoms to the weapons of desperate men, was a trial of their spirit which allows us to withhold from them no praise or glory which we give to our fathers, save that which belongs to our fathers as the champions of the better cause. The highest honor we can bestow upon the heroism of the enemy, is, in regretting that the King and his ministers found such devoted servants.

Such is but a faint delineation, in feeble words, of the action which we commemorate. And now, if I were to say that the intrenching and the defence of Breed's Hill was the most important action in our revolutionary war, the assertion might be set down to the account of a rhetorical exaltation of a theme committed to the hands of an orator for a festive occasion—and rival claimants might arise to vindicate the fame of our other battle-fields. Yet, without a word or a figure of exaggeration, the battle of June 17th may be placed first in importance in the calendar of our conflicts. The whole protracted struggle was decisively influenced by this, its opening contest. The battle was fought by the provincials in earnest, with determined spirit, with proud success, though not with final victory, and therefore it gave the impulse of a good beginning to the whole conduct of the war. Let us briefly review its results, that we may weigh its importance.

This battle accomplished what, in all cases of strife and discord, it is very important yet very difficult to accomplish—it distinguished the two contending parties, and brought them to an issue. There were then several links of union between England and the colonists, formed by the various orders, classes and coteries then gathered in this neighborhood, and by their diverse opinions. Some of our most honored and disinterested countrymen, and some of the British officers, engaged with extreme reluctance in the hostilities. We had among us not only tories and republicans, but timid and cautious hesitants, and attached friends to the restricted exercise of royal authority. There were moderate and immoderate men of both parties, neutral and lukewarm doubters of no party. While reading the history of the period, we readily imagine the thousand social ties and domestic relations, the civilities of neighborhood and the common interest in the land across the water, which might well make it a difficult thing, a work requiring time and even blood, to separate the people of the province into two parties distinct at every point. Had

it not been for the affair at Lexington, it is probable that matters might have remained quiet for some time longer, and that the colonists would have wasted many more words of petition upon the ministry. Even after that battle, had the ministry expressed in strong terms their disapprobation of Gage's measure, and adopted a conciliatory tone, the war might have been then averted. But the affair of the 17th June at once put a stop to any further halting between two opinions.

Again, that action was of primary importance from the influence which it exercised upon our fathers, who, unknown to themselves, had before them a war of protracted length, partaking largely of reverse and discouragement. They learned this day what they might do in the confidence that God was on their side and that their cause was good. That work of a summer's night, was worth its price to them. They lacked discipline, artillery, bayonets, powder and ball, food, and—the greatest want of all—they lacked the delicious draught of pure, cool water for their labor-worn and heat-exhausted frames. They found that desperation would supply the place of discipline; that the stock of a musket, wielded with true nerves, would deal a blow as deadly as the thrust of a bayonet; and that a heavy stone might level an assailant as well as a charge of powder. As for food and water, the hunger they were compelled to bear unrelieved, and they cooled their brows only by the thick, heavy drops which poured before the sun. Yet it was their opening combat, and proudly did they bear away its laurels, even upon their backs, which the failure of ammunition and of reinforcements compelled them to turn to the enemy. Yes, they did show their backs once to those whose backs they had already seen twice; and if they retreated once, it was only that they might save their faces for later and bolder opportunities of confronting the foe. It was their opening combat, and it decided the spirit and the hope of all their subsequent campaigns. They had freed themselves during the en-

gagement from all that natural reluctance which they had heretofore felt in turning their offensive weapons against the breasts of former friends, yes, even of kinsmen. On that eminence, the first bright image of liberty, of a free native land, kindled the eyes of those who were expiring in their gore, and the image passed between the living and the dying to seal the covenant, that the hope of the one, or the fate of the other, should unite them here or hereafter. It was the report of that battle, which, transmitted by swift couriers over the length and breadth of the continent, would every where prepare the spirit to follow it up with determined resistance to every future act of aggression. How can we exaggerate the relative importance of this day's action? Did it not in fact open the contest, dividing into two parties, not only those determined for the ministry or the colony, but likewise all timid, hesitating, reluctant neutrals? It was difficult after this to avoid taking sides. Did it not at once render all reconciliation impossible, till it should offer itself in company with justice and liberty? Did it not echo the gathering cry which brought together our people from their farms and workshops, to learn the art of war, that terrible art, which grows more merciful only as it is the more skilfully pursued? This day, then, needs no rhetoric to magnify it in our revolutionary annals. After its sun went down, the provincials parted with all fear, hesitation and reluctance. They found that it was easier to fight; the awful roar of the death-dealing arms associated itself in their minds with all their wrongs, and all their hopes, and with the sweet word of liberty. The pen with which petitions were written had been found to be powerless: words of remonstrance left no impression upon the air. There was but one resource. From the village homes and farm-houses around, amid the encouraging exhortations, as well as the tearful prayers of their families, the yeomen took from their chimney-stacks the familiar and well-proved weapons of a life in the woods, and felt

for the first time what it was to have a country, and resolved for the first time that they would save their country or be mourned by her.

And if further evidence be needed in support of the high importance which I have attached to this day's conflict, let me refer to the effect which the announcement of it produced in Great Britain, upon the ministry and the people. One fact painfully evident to the student of our revolutionary history, is, that the war was commenced by the ministry and allowed by the people under the grossest misapprehension of the character and courage of the inhabitants of this province. Parliament was in a state of perfect infatuation when it gave ear to the speeches that advised the measures of the ministry, and represented the enforcing of them as so easy a work. For though Parliament had been warned by all the local information of our former Governor Pownall, by the philosophy of Burke, and the tender appeals of Lord Chatham, that conciliatory measures would be the only efficient measures, there was either stupidity, folly or madness in the self-conceited persuasion, that a race of men who had left their native country to escape oppression, would consent to be oppressed in a new country redeemed by them from a wilderness, made habitable by virtuous toil, and endeared as always free. The last three English Governors of this province, and the ministry at home, had represented the American people as wholly under the control of a few ambitious leaders, demagogues or revolutionists, who, by exciting speeches, spread enthusiasm among the multitude, cajoling and flattering them with the enticing word—liberty. It was alleged in Parliament that the people would succumb, if their leaders could be silenced. This battle proved that a people who showed such a spirit, must be capable of originating some enthusiasm in themselves, as well as of being cajoled into it by others. They had been represented as cowards who dared to fire a musket only at a long distance, and from behind a protection, and the people of England had been

promised that one regiment of the King's troops should sweep the provincials off the continent. But after this battle the probability of such a result was reduced to this simple rule of three ; if so many of his Majesty's regiments were necessary to secure the square feet of ground occupied by Charlestown peninsula, how many would be needed to sweep the continent ?

The people of England were instructed by this day's news to estimate the bravery, the union, the determined purpose of the colonists. On this point I deem it important to enlarge. It was greatly in favor of our cause, that the unpopularity of the war among the mercantile classes of England, should be increased by such a representation of its progress, as would induce the pride of the British to listen at last to prudence. While the ministry flattered the people with fables about our pusillanimity and poverty, and called for new resources against us, promising that each demand should be the last, only the report of such poor success as attended their hostilities upon this peninsula, could open the eyes of the British nation to the hopelessness of their measures.

The account of the battle transmitted by General Gage, accompanied of course by numerous private letters, was received in London July 25th. The General estimated his loss at 226 killed, and 828 wounded. The ministry were dismayed, and for a time kept back the official announcement from the Gazette. It was known, however, that government despatches had been received, and in order to draw forth their contents, some ingenious persons wrote from their imaginations what purported to be an account of the battle, and published it in the newspapers. By this fictitious statement, the regulars were said to have been defeated with great slaughter. Thus the administration were obliged to prepare their own statement for the Gazette as soon as possible. Even with a favorable garb thrown around its announcement, the official account shocked and alarmed the people. They waited with the

utmost anxiety for the representation which the provincials might give of the battle, and to hear the measures of the Congress. They changed their opinion of us when they found that one square mile of our territory had cost them more than a thousand men. As the news of the engagement circulated in England, it called out popular expressions which exhibited the general dissatisfaction with the war. The official publications were made up from the accounts of Gage, Howe and Burgoyne; they were replied to, even in London, with cutting sarcasm.

Burgoyne, writing to Lord Stanley, had asserted that "the day ended with glory." To this it was well replied that a few more equally glorious victories would ruin the whole kingdom. He expressed regret in his letter that his nephew, the brother of Lord Stanley, had not been with him in the battery on Copp's Hill, as spectator of the battle from a safe [and somewhat cowardly] position, where two cannon-balls went a hundred yards above his head. He described in glowing language the conflagration of Charlestown—"straight before us a large and noble town, in one bright blaze"—the flames wreathing the high timber spire of the church, the falling of whole streets, the burning of vessels on the stocks, and the roar of the cannon. The whole of his letter was ludicrously criticised.

General Gage, writing to Lord Dartmouth, the head of the war department, concludes thus: "the rebels are not the despicable rabble too many suppose them to be, and I find it owing to a military spirit encouraged among them for a few years past, joined with an uncommon degree of zeal and enthusiasm, that they are otherwise." The commentary of the newspaper critic on this remark, was: "The Americans are either the cleverest fellows in the world at making strong lines in three or four hours, or the most desperate enemy in defending them." The report in London was, that General Gage was ordered not to hazard another engagement till he was reinforced,

though it was doubted whether the provincials would leave this at his option; that he was ordered to depart from Boston, after burning it, and to fortify himself upon Rhode Island, whence he might make descents upon the coast; and that 1000 stand of arms and 1000 Highlanders had been sent to Quebec. So high did sympathy for us rise in England, that on the 23d of August the King issued a proclamation against all in his realms who should aid, correspond with, or favor the rebels. It was found that the revenue so unblushingly promised in Parliament, was to require a large outlay for its collection in the colonies. Instead of receiving taxes from us, they were obliged to send regiments of their own subjects, with foreign mercenaries, and coals, faggots, vinegar, porter, hay, vegetables, sheep, oxen, horses, clothing—to say nothing of munitions of war—across 3000 miles of water, and even then, to anticipate, as the result proved, with good reason, that some of their richest transports would fall into the hands of these reluctant tax-payers. Some of the Highlanders who were induced to enlist by the representations of recruiting sergeants, were told that they were to take possession of some vacant farms in this country, the owners of which had been driven into the interior. They even received certificates that when the rebellion here was subdued, each of them should have a clear title to two hundred acres of land for himself, and fifty acres in addition for each member of his family.

By a resolution of the Provincial Congress at Watertown, July 7th, the Committee of Safety prepared an account of the engagement on the 17th June, to be transmitted to Great Britain, for the sake of counteracting the influence of any misrepresentations on the part of Gen. Gage. The account was dated July 25, and sent to Arthur Lee, at London, who caused it to be published in the papers. But the sympathies and complaints of the English people were not left to be excited merely by documents sent from this side of the water, and answered by

well-freighted transports from Britain. The people were made to witness some melancholy results of the battle, which brought its pictures of sorrow to their own doors. On September 14th, a transport (the *Charming Nancy*,) arrived at Plymouth, having left Boston August 20th. On board were General Gage's lady, and 170 sick and wounded officers and soldiers, with 60 widows and children of the slain. The stench of the vessel was intolerable, but the condition of its human cargo was awful. Maimed and helpless, ragged and pined with sickness, many of them hundreds of miles from their home in Ireland,—the sufferers, as they were landed and begged for charity in the streets, presented a most deplorable and wretched tale of the unnatural strife. Two more vessels with similar cargoes, which left Boston at the same time, were daily expected, and more were on their way. Thus was Boston relieved of a part of its helpless victims, and thus were the people of England most piteously besought to spare the blood of their own kinsfolk, rather than to make so fearful a sacrifice to national pride, to lust of dominion, and to the wealth expected from the taxation of the colonies.

Nor did the conduct of the battle, on the part of the British generals, escape severe scrutiny and censure. Plans were stated, and alternatives imagined, by which they might have secured a nearly bloodless victory. These complaints were made with good reason. A ship of war, some floating batteries, or the *Cymetry* transport, which drew but little water, might have been towed into Mystic river, and lying water-borne at low tide, (for during the heat of the strife the water was at ebb,) would have been within musket-shot of our left flank, and have rendered the rail fence useless. The regulars might have landed in the rear of the provincials, and thus have surrounded them, have incapacitated the breastwork, cut off a retreat, and occupied Bunker's Hill. Or, supposing it was most in accordance with military rule and prudence

that they should have landed as they did, in front, they should not have advanced in an extended line, firing at intervals, but formed into columns should have rushed forward, reserving their fire for the redoubt, and charging with the bayonet. Their first two attacks were disastrous to themselves, but harmless to us. The simple truth seems to be, that the regular officers had a most despicable opinion of the provincials, and thought that the smell of powder, the glancing of bright bayonets, and a well deployed line, would frighten them into flight. They were grievously mistaken. But after all, when the dear-won victory was theirs, why did they not pursue to Cambridge under cover of their own ships, especially as towards, and after, the close of the battle, Charlestown was filled with British troops who were hurrying over from Boston ?

Another result attending the news of the battle in England, was the immediate recall of General Gage. Just before the arrival of the news, despatches had been prepared, yet not transmitted to him, in which his future operations were directed. But these despatches, when sent, were accompanied by another, in which he was directed to give them to General Howe, who was to succeed him in the command, and in which he was advised that it was his Majesty's pleasure that he should immediately return to give information and counsel at home. It is likewise a remarkable, but a very manifest fact, that the disastrous character of this battle, the desperate courage of the provincials, and the hopeless aspect which the designs of the ministry began in consequence to wear, completely unmanned General Howe, deprived him of all energy in the conduct of the war, and entailed upon him disgrace.

Such were the effects produced by this battle upon our enemies. They might be indefinitely enlarged upon, traced out in British petitions and addresses to the throne, in public opposition meetings held throughout

the kingdom, in the reluctance of the soldiers to enlist in that cause and the high bounty promised to their services, and especially in the increasing number of the avowed and secret friends of the colonies in England.

While such were the results of the battle on the other side of the water, its effects upon our own army and cause contribute to magnify its importance. I might trace out the influence of that battle through the whole war, might refer to the spirit and determination and self-respect which it infused into the provincials. I might find in every subsequent engagement of the war some individuals who had learned their military elements on June 17. But I will confine myself to a statement of its immediate results which were favorable to our cause. Many of our officers had received their commissions from Great Britain, and were in the receipt of half-pay at the time of the battle, which they of course resigned.

The British took possession of, and strongly fortified Bunker and Breed's Hills, and posted their advanced guards upon the neck. This division of their forces between the two peninsulas was in one point of view advantageous to them, as it enlarged their quarters at a season of the year when Boston, crowded as it was, and made unwholesome by impure air, seemed as one large hospital. The cool heights of Charlestown were a refreshing refuge; yet they were compelled to a great increase of their labor in defending their works against an enemy so near to them, who insulted and vexed them and made them feel the degradation of their position. During the ensuing inclement winter, the troops in Charlestown were obliged to live in tents and were exposed to great sufferings, and to driving snow-storms. Neither did the possession of Charlestown give the enemy any facility in obtaining supplies of fresh provisions, in which the country abounded, but of which they had enjoyed little, if any, since the battle of Lexington. In this respect their condition was trying in the extreme. They could procure no fresh meat, vegeta-

bles, milk, or fuel, save what came in by water. The provincials took the live stock and the hay off of the harbor islands, and intercepted many of the vessels entering with supplies. In a letter from an officer in Boston to a gentlemen in London, dated July 25, the writer says, they felt themselves worse off than the rebels; as to numbers, like a few children in a large crowd; that the provincials daily grew more bold, menacing insolently, and leading the regulars to fear that, when the short nights came, the threats would be executed. He adds, "They know our situation as well as we do ourselves, from the villains that are left in town, who acquaint them with all our proceedings, making signals by night with gunpowder, and at day, out of the church steeples. About three weeks ago, three fellows were taken out of one of the latter, who confessed that they had been so employed for seven days. Another was caught last week swimming over to the rebels with one of their General's passes in his pocket. He will be hanged in a day or two." The writer adds other instances of the boldness of the rebels in beating in the advanced guard on the British lines at Roxbury and destroying the guard-house, and in the pillaging and destruction of the lighthouse by some yankees who landed from boats, while a British ship of war lay becalmed within a mile.

And what a cheering spectacle was set before the eyes of our fathers when the American army, intrenching upon all the beautiful and elevated hills which bound the semi-circle around us, confined their enemy to these two peninsulas. There was no concealing the fact that the ministerial troops felt deeply the degradation of their situation, and were dispirited by it to a degree that weakened their moral and physical energies through the whole war. From the best information that Washington, on assuming his command July 3, could obtain, he rated the number of the enemy at 11,500, while the provincials numbered 16,000 to 17,000. The sentries of the opposing forces stationed

upon Charlestown neck were near enough to converse together. We are forcibly reminded of that admirable trait in the character of Washington—a scrupulous attention to minutiae—as well as of the spirit of patriotism which sustained us under the war, by several of the “orders” issued by our General under these circumstances. He expressly forbade that any post of peculiar responsibility, such as that of sentry or guard at the advanced lines upon Roxbury or Charlestown necks, should be committed to any other than a native of this country, who had a wife and family in it, and was known to be attached to its interests. “This order is to be considered as a standing one, and the officers are to pay obedience to it at their peril.”

The contrast between the health, and the food, of the regulars and of the provincials was extremely tantalizing. Hand-bills were printed at Cambridge, and sent on a favorable wind across the lines into the British camp. On one of these, an address to the British soldiers bears the following contrasted bills of fare, in the two camps :—

| PROSPECT HILL. | BUNKER'S HILL. |
|--|--------------------------------|
| I. Seven dollars a month. | I. Threepence a day. |
| II. Fresh provisions and in plenty. | II. Rotten Salt Pork. |
| III. Health. | III. The Scurvy. |
| IV. Freedom, ease, affluence, and a good farm. | IV. Slavery, beggary and want. |

In reviewing the whole struggle whose opening contest we this day commemorate, we have a duty to perform as patriots and as christians; let us hope that there be no discord in our sentiments or purposes as we apply to ourselves those two epithets. As patriots we would vindicate our country, but as christians we must regret the war, the civil strife, the bloody conflict, so utterly irreconcilable with the spirit and precepts of our religion.

In the English reviews of the conduct of the war on the part of the Americans, we are to repel two principal

charges made against our fathers. The first charge is of old standing, the second is recent.

First.—It was said that *Independence*—absolute freedom from English control—was from the beginning the secret object of the American patriots, disguised for a time under fawning expressions of loyalty, words of mere compliment and hypocritical pretensions, and that this secret object was cunningly developed by degrees and cautious processes as the minds of the people were prepared. Of course this charge is to be sustained or repelled only by documentary evidence. Independence can be shown to have been the *primary* object of our patriots only by their own statements, and it can be shown to have been their *secret* object, only by the evidence of private papers, in which, under the rose, they express themselves in direct opposition to their pretended sentiments in their public documents. Such evidence cannot be produced, it does not exist, and it never did exist. The specific charge is false. Undoubtedly some of the far-seeing patriots might have imagined or anticipated the result of the contest in its early stages—indeed not only did American patriots imagine the result, but English patriots, the opponents of the war in Parliament, particularly Lord Chatham, Mr. Burke, and Governor Pownall, predicted the result. No imputation of covert designs can rest upon our patriots. There is a natural working towards the far-off but destined result in the earliest stages of an action, and long before the result is known or contemplated by human agents.

Besides, let it be remembered that if there was a growth and development in American resistance leading inevitably to independence, so was there a growth and development in British oppression, leading inevitably to tyranny. American measures of combination, of non-importation and non-consumption, of providing minute-men and military stores, and of collecting an army, ran exactly parallel with ministerial measures, in successive taxes, in quartering an

army upon the province in time of peace, in interfering with the General Court, in committing the payment of the salaries of the Governor and Judges to the King, instead of leaving it with the colonists, in taking the appointment of the councillors from the people and giving it to the King, in exempting several officials from the colony tax, in fortifying Roxbury neck, in a long succession of insults, and in a hostile incursion into the country. If the American patriots are to be accused of cherishing secretly the purpose of independence, while in the early stage of the conflict they spoke loyal words, why may not the British be accused of cherishing secretly the intention of tyranny while in the early stage of the conflict they spoke the words of parental tenderness and protection? When our Declaration of Independence was known in England, there were loud and insulting sneers upon the hypocritical pretensions of our former Congressional addresses and petitions to the King, and especially of that address, signed by all the members, and called "the Olive Branch," which was presented to the King, August 1775, and to which no answer was returned. The Declaration was spoken of as the removal of the veil, the disclosure of long-cherished purposes, and the people of England were generally more inclined to the continuance of the war, than they had been to its commencement.

Yet there is abundant evidence to prove that the result of independence was at first far from the minds of the great mass, deprecated by many, very slowly admitted to the thoughts, kept at a distance by repeated and renewed addresses and petitions, made familiar only by familiarity with oppression, and at last independence was declared with mingled feelings partaking of justice and exasperation, of despair and hope. Such, certainly, was the case with the people, nor can it be proved that it was otherwise with the leaders. Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress, dated February 9th, 1776, five months before the Declaration of Independence, gives

evidence that even he thought of peace upon other terms. He says, "I am entirely of your opinion, that, should an accommodation take place, the terms will be severe or favorable, in proportion to our ability to resist, and that we ought to be on a respectable footing to receive their armaments in the spring."

The second, the more recent charge, as observed by Professor Smyth, "the most serious charge that can be brought against the American leaders in this dispute," is, that without the prospect of a fair chance of success, the American leaders hurried their countrymen into measures, regarded and punishable as rebellion. It is said that the chance of success was not a fair one; that though the American leaders might have foreseen their difficulties, they could not have foreseen, they would not have been justified in imagining, the failure of the British. But who were the rulers, who were the leaders, that led the people into these measures? They were not self-constituted advisers and demagogues, hurrying on the unthinking and the unwilling. The leaders were led by the people in this, our revolution; they were called out, delegated, appointed, by town meetings, and popular gatherings; they spoke the minds, and were the instruments of the people. The leaders did not commence hostilities. The people passed the resolutions for non-importation and non-consumption, which on our part brought on the trouble, and in a mass they chose, they cheered on, advised and accompanied their leaders. And there was a fair chance of succeeding in all that was *attempted or aimed at, at first*. The stamp act had been repealed on account of the resistance which it met with, and it was hoped that other offensive measures would yield in the same way. After a while, however, the leaders, in discharge of their duty, did lead and advise. They urged on the people, excited and encouraged them, as it was right they should do. Thus patriotism, in reviewing that dreadful civil contest, can justify the measures of our fathers. at

least by the rules of war and the customs of nations. They were blameless in the code of honor.

And how shall the Christian review that civil war, that conflict between brethren, decided by the flowing of human blood? To the principles of peace societies, lately promulgated and advocated among civilized nations, we must allow this much, that no complete vindication can be made for any war or battle which shall be consistent with the spirit and lessons of Christianity. The Gospel of Jesus Christ will not countenance, or justify, or allow a resort to arms. Yet, and here it seems to me that the advocates of peace principles apply the instruments of their reform too much to war itself, rather than to the causes of war—yet Christianity not only refuses to justify a resort to arms, but Christianity condemns the practice of those wrongs which result in war. Condemning the result, Christianity must of course condemn the more, the successive steps which lead to that result. Here, then, is the question—whether as Christians we shall not rather deplore the accumulation of abuses which must necessarily end in strife, than the strife itself. If this be so, then, it may be that war in some instances may be justified, in as far as it is a result which cannot be averted, a result of abuses which ought to have been restrained or redressed, before it was too late.

There are persons among us who have lately raised the question whether our revolutionary war was justifiable on peace principles. In one point of view the question provokes a smile. It is somewhat as if a man who had crammed himself with a luxurious dinner, should impede its digestion by doubting whether he had come honestly by the dinner. In another point of view the question is a serious one, as it involves the profoundest principles of moral and political science. Yet let not the indignation of the Christian fall so much upon the war, which may be the unavoidable result, as upon the wrongs, the grievances, and the tyrannical oppression which neces-

sarily end in the war. The profession of the soldier has received undeserved abuse. Soldiers, indeed, do the fighting, but it ought to be remembered that others besides soldiers bring on the quarrel, and then leave it to soldiers to be finished.

I can realize in my imagination the direful and accumulated miseries of war; but the question to be decided when a war is to be hazarded, is, whether these miseries are greater than the evils which are sought to be redressed by a war. If there are miseries in war, there are miseries likewise in slavish subjection, in the bondage of one territory and people to another territory and people, separated from them by an ocean. England has now unwilling tributaries and dependencies, with Ireland at the head of the list. Ireland struggles in vain against unjust and oppressive measures; we struggled with success, and bore the miseries of war. Which people now enjoy the preferable condition, the Irish or the Americans? All the accumulated miseries of war are felt at the time, yet they do not avert the war. In the preparation of bandages and the erection of hospitals, in the burying of the dead on the battle-field, and in the houseless beggary of the widow and the orphan, the miseries of war are sorely felt at the moment, yet they do not avert the war. These miseries are all neutralized by some pressing, some inciting wretchedness or fear, which reaches deeper into the heart. We cannot paint or imagine those miseries as the sufferers experience them—they meet them in all their horrors, yet they meet them knowingly, by choice, by preference, before what they must endure to purchase peace by submission. When the mother receives in her village home the tidings that her husband and her eldest son fell upon the last field of conflict, she will arm her second son, and send him forth with sadness, yet with free choice, to meet the perils of the next action.

And what patriot or Christian comparing the events of this day, which have given it an imperishable title in our

annals, with the prosperity and happiness with which we now commemorate it, can fail to feel a glad and holy influence working upon his heart? Our retrospect of the past should enforce our duty as based upon our gratitude. Patriotism is a word which we may hear everywhere, and while the politician always uses it in justification of his cause, let us remember that it is but a word which is the common property of human mouths. But patriotism as a moving impulse, working with spells of power on the heart, and inciting to personal sacrifices for one's country and one's posterity, has been forever vindicated as a real, yes, a religious sentiment, by the contrasted prospects of carnage once, of prosperity now, upon which the sun has shone on that summit. It will require no strong effort of the imagination to bring the slain of that battle to unite in these our commemorative services. Their ashes and their blood are always with us—they are mingled with the soil and the verdure of the hill-top, and when liberty is our theme, their spirits, which went forth from the clay in a shout of glory for liberty, return again and exalt our theme. And if they are with us, they ask but one question, and look to us for an answer—it is this. We now enjoy what they died in agony to secure for us. They ask us if the inheritance is worthy of its purchase? And if it be worthy of the blood which purchased it, let us ask ourselves if it be not worthy of the righteousness in heart and life which is required to retain it?

One word, in conclusion, of serious counsel, the place where I stand, and the office which I discharge, alike require that I should speak. I have been compelled to use the term enemies, to express the relation which the counsellors and the soldiers of the land of our fathers once sustained towards the people of this republic. The term enemies has now lost its meaning, as applied to them—it comes into use only as the counterpart to our designation of rebels. Let every feeling of enmity then be banished from the present while we survey the past.

If that monumental pillar, which is now so rapidly and so boldly rearing its solid shaft towards the heavens, is ever to excite hate or passion in any Briton or American who shall gaze upon it, may the next flash of lightning rend it into ruin! Beneath its foundation are mingled in quiet companionship the ashes of friend and foe, and as closely are our national interests associated with the prosperity and the glory too, of the land of our fathers. I may venture to illustrate the intimacy of this dependence by the statement of a pleasing and a somewhat remarkable fact. I have sought to pay a deserved tribute to the heroic conduct of Colonel William Prescott. His son, who bears his name, is known and respected by all who hear me, as a Judge and a Counsellor. There is yet another who bears that worthy name in connection with public distinction. I refer to the author of that beautiful and interesting history, which has been justly esteemed abroad as the first literary production of our country. Over the shelves of the library in which that history was composed, two swords are now crossed in amicable union—one was wielded in the redoubt upon yonder summit, by the gallant Prescott; the other, upon the same day, was in the hands of Captain Linzee, commander of the sloop of war Falcon, then lying at the foot of the hill. Crossed as we may say upon that day, in deadly strife, how have they thus been brought into amicable union? The minister of God made harmony between them by consecrating the vows of matrimony between the grandchildren of the combatants. Let the peace and good will thus established between the leaders of the strife, while the edges of their swords are blunted by their blades—let this happy result, which is something more than an emblem, be the pledge of mutual dependence and love between the people of the nations whose unnatural conflict we now dismiss once more to the oblivion of the past.

X 1 5



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 800 450 4

